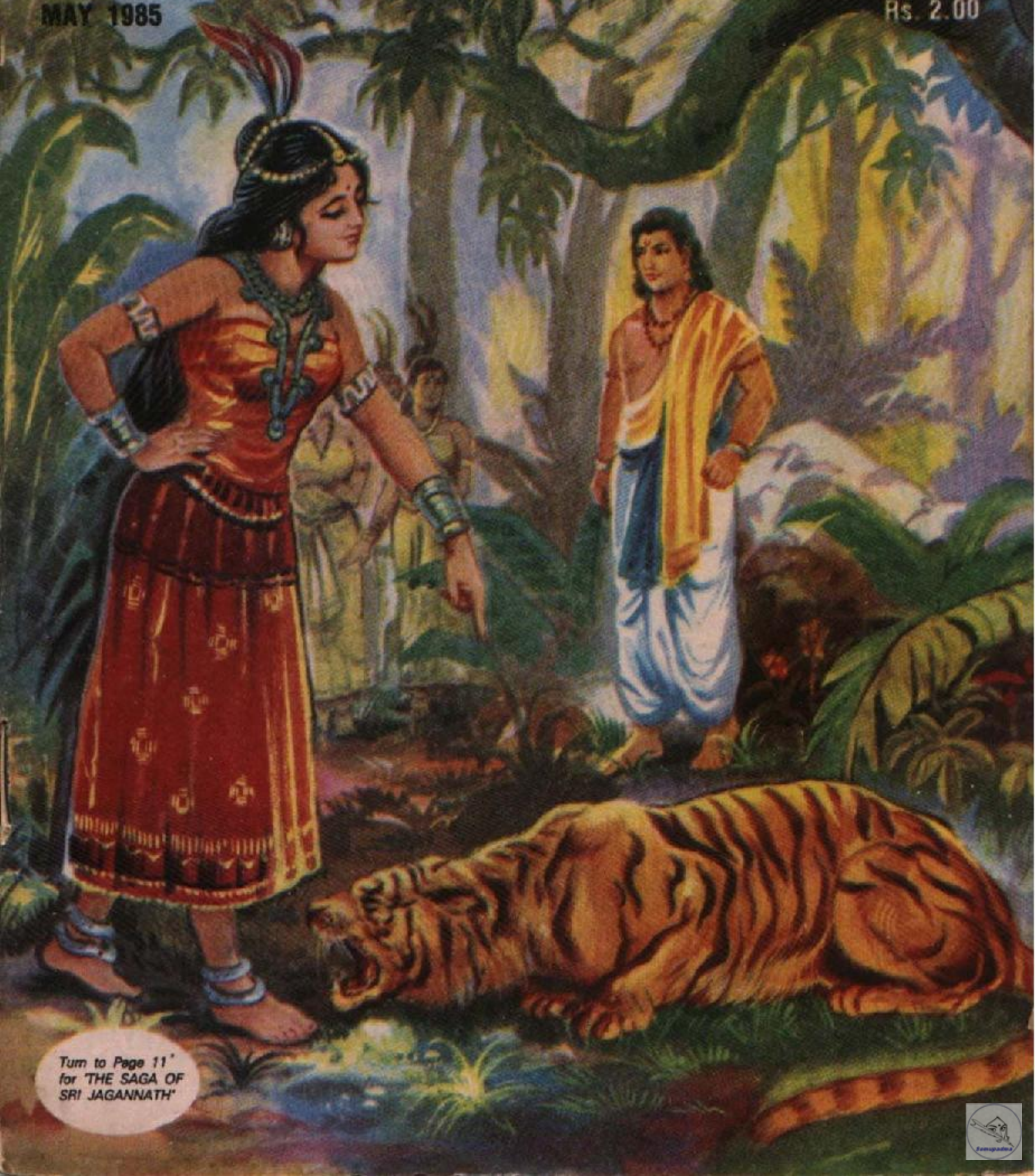


CHANDAMAMA

MAY 1985

Rs. 2.00



Turn to Page 11*
for 'THE SAGA OF
SRI JAGANNATH'



The Maltova Gang takes to the hills.

What a way to start the holidays! The whole gang decided to go hiking at Karnala Fort, near Bombay! Daboo and Malti were in charge of the picnic lunch... sandwiches, apples, biscuits. And a large, comforting flask of Maltova at the ready!

Minnie gets lost...

The gang set off with the sunrise, reaching Karnala Bird Sanctuary in time for breakfast. After a quick cup of Maltova, they were up, up and away. Little Minnie scampered ahead. And got lost! Now what? Everyone was worried. It seemed as if the sun had gone behind the clouds when suddenly... there he was, that lovable magic Elephant.

Leading a dishevelled, sheepish Minnie by the hand! She had wandered away in search of wildflowers and couldn't find her way back. "Minnie, next time you do something silly like that, we won't take

you hiking with us again," scolded Daboo. "I think she's learnt her lesson," said Venu and Salim together. "Let's carry on."

It was a beautiful, beautiful day

The gang enjoyed their picnic at the fort. After a brisk game of cops and robbers, it was time to go home. But first things first: a hot, comforting mug of Maltova for everyone. "Now, Minnie, stay close and don't vanish," said Daboo. And down the hill they went, a song on their lips and joy in their hearts.

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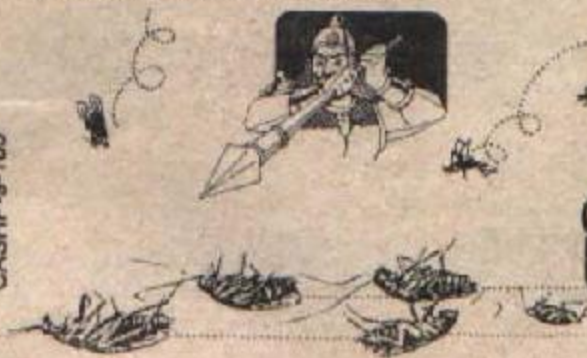
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The day my son discovered cavities!

"MUMMY, Anil's got holes in his teeth!"

"You mean cavities, love?"

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"Forhan's Fluoride, my dear."

"Oh yes... I told him I use it because you say it's good. And because I like it."

"It's good because it strengthens your gums, and gives your teeth a long life."

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The tasty, foamy toothpaste that protects both gums and teeth.



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NEXT ISSUE

- * *Vidyapati and Lalita: in the Saga of Sri Jagannath.*
- * *Amba: an astounding character from Indian Classics.*
- * *VIPASHA: Pictorial story of one of the sacred rivers of India.*
- * *A story from the Arabian Nights, a legend of India, a humorous story presented through pictures, Towards better English, The Nature's Kingdom, Newsflash, Let Us Know and a bunch of absorbing stories.*

Thoughts to be Treasured

"Non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues."

—Gandhiji

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CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

THE SAGA OF SRI JAGANNATH

One of the most ancient places of pilgrimage in India is Puri. The chief Deity in the magnificent temple of Puri is Sri Jagannath. The others are Balabhadra, his elder brother and Subhadra, their sister.

From this combination of Deities it would be evident that Sri Jagannath is none other than Krishna. It is believed that the images contain some Relics of Krishna at the points of their navels. From time to time the old wooden images are buried, but not before the sacred content of the navels are secretly transferred to the new images.

You have read how Krishna left his body shot at by Jara's arrow. Did the remorseful Jara leave the Western coast and come away to a forest in the East—carrying with him Krishna's Relics? Were his descendants the custodians of these Relics? Do the present images of the Deities contain these Relics?

Perhaps we will never find sure answers to these questions. However, the dramatic legends behind Sri Jagannath will lead you to your own conclusions. The narration begins in this issue.



पातेन कम्बुक इवोत्पतत्यार्यः पतन्नपि ।

तथा त्वनार्यः पतति मृत्पिण्डपतनं यथा ॥

Pātena kandaṭṭka ivotpatatyāryaḥ patannapi

Tathā tvanāryaḥ patati mṛtipiṇḍapatanam yathā.

A worthy man might fall, but he rebounds like a ball.
But when an unworthy man falls, he lies like a lump of mud.

— The Subhasitavalih





**We're all in it together
for the fun of it,
for the taste of it!**

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IT'S THE FLAVOUR OF FUN!**

Artificially flavoured. Contains no fruit juice or fruit pulp.



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NEWS FLASH



Brighter and Sweeter?

Money was first minted in India in the A.D. third century. They were silver coins, according to Prof. Irfan Habib, economic historian from Aligarh University.

New Standards

We know that there are several committees all over the world which select the best films. In New Jersey there is a committee to select the most boring films. "Our staff slept through endless films in order to select them!" said their executive director.



X-Ray without Film

The world's first filmless X-ray system which enables on-the-spot diagnosis of diseases on a TV screen, has been invented in Japan.

Date of Crucifixion

On which day was Jesus Christ crucified? Historians and theologians have different theories. According to the research of two professors of Oxford University, the event occurred on Friday, the 3rd of April, A.D. 33.



The New Bear

He is not exactly new; his tribe has been living in Nepal's remote Barun Valley all the time. But scientists have not seen them. A team of explorers from West Virginia, led by Daniel Taylor-Ide, is trying to locate them.



LET US KNOW

What are the books Kalidasa wrote?

—Susmita, Calcutta.

The *Raghuvamsam* and the *Kumarasambhavam* (epics), the *Vikramorvashiyam*, the *Malavikagnimitram*, and the *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* (plays); *Meghadutam* and the *Ritusamhara* (lyrical poetry).

Which religion has the largest number of followers?

—P.R. Satheesan, Delhi.

Christianity (of both Catholic and Protestant faith) is the most widely prevailing religion.

When was the wrist watch made?

—G. Nagendra Prasad, Ongole.

The earliest known wrist watches were made in Geneva. They date back to 1790. But the use of wrist watches gained popularity only during our century. Before 1930 people generally used pocket watches.

What is the full form of the abbreviated term UNESCO?

—Mukund Kulkarni, Bombay.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.



The Saga Of SRI JAGANNATH

—by Manoj Das

King Indradyumna was most dear to his subjects. He was great in many respects. Bards sang his praise in many verses. So many smaller kings paid their tributes to him.

He had plenty of wealth to bestow rewards on scholars and poets and to give alms to the needy. He made all happy.

But lately he was found to be a bit unhappy himself. Is it because he lacked anything? Is it because some of his desires remained unfulfilled?

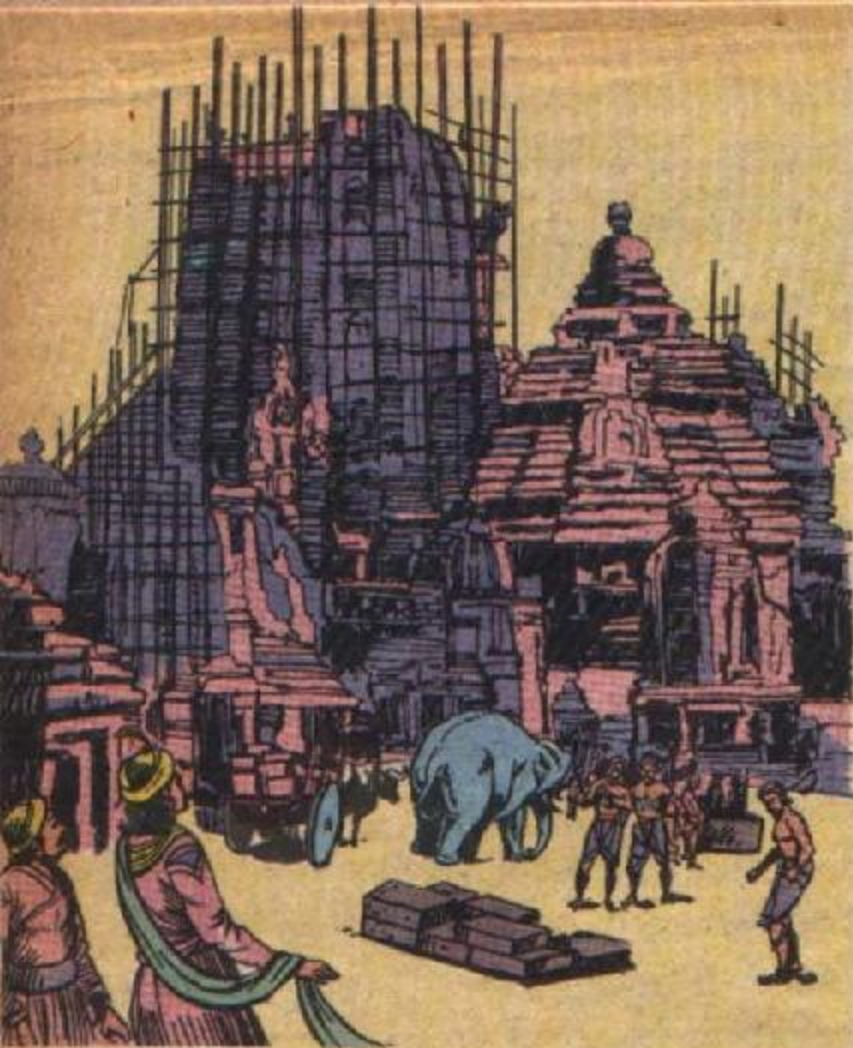
No. Why was he unhappy

then? At the beginning he could not have answered the question himself. But slowly the answer dawned on his mind. Like a temple on the horizon becoming visible when the mist disappears, the vagueness in his mind gradually gave way to a distinct vision.

Indeed, it was a lofty vision—the vision of a temple. He must build a magnificent temple, a great shrine that would be a seat of pilgrimage for millions of devotees for ages to come.

But a temple for whom? Who





is the deity to be enshrined in it? Was it not strange one should feel the urge to build a temple when one was not sure of the deity to be worshipped in it? The king himself wondered.

But he was not required to wonder for long. He heard a voice in his dream: "Build the temple. You will find the deity when it is time."

King Indradyumna woke up, his nerves tingling with a sublime feeling. There was no longer any hesitation in him. He summoned his ministers as soon as it was morning and revealed to them his decision to build the temple. Astrologers were asked to locate the right place for the

temple and to find out the most auspicious time and day for the foundation-laying ceremony. Amidst sounds of conch-shells and chanting of hymns the project was launched on the wide seashore of Puri.

Huge blocks of stone of a special quality were collected from mountains far away. They came by boats through the sea and the river and were brought to the site loaded on huge carts drawn by elephants.

Thousands of workers, craftsmen, sculptors and architects were busy constructing the monument. The magic of their love and labour made flowers bloom on the stones. Upon a vast stretch of sands kissed by the sea-waves the monument rose higher and higher, befriending the clouds.

Years passed and the temple was completed. But where is the deity? That is the question everybody began asking.

Although the king did not show it, he too was growing anxious on the issue. One day he sat inside the new temple and looking at the inner chamber designed to house the deity, prayed to God, "In what form will you like to dwell in this

temple? Is it not time I was told about it? How long to wait? Won't all the people laugh at me if this huge temple, built with so much labour care, remains empty for a long time?"

That very night, in his dream, the king was told that somewhere, not far from Puri, lay hidden the deity for whom the temple had been made. He was Krishna and He waited to be discovered!

The king knew that it was not going to be easy to discover the deity, for to play hide-and-seek was in Krishna's nature! One to be able to find him must be intelligent, wise and a devotee

of the Lord. The King selected four worthy scholars from his court and sent them in four directions.

The youngest of them, Vidyapati, went eastward and then took a turn towards the north. Soon he entered a wild forest. He could have surely avoided it, but he was not acting according to his own will. From time to time he prayed to Krishna. He felt as if his prayer was leading him in a certain direction!

So he braved into the forest which was growing thicker and thicker. He came across a small hill. To his surprise, it appeared



to be a musical hill! Tender sounds of drum and flute, of clapping of hands and songs, seemed to be emanating from the hill. It did not of course take him long to understand that the music came from the other side of the hill.

He climbed the hill. A slope led into a beautiful valley. A dozen of tribal girls were dancing and singing. Vidyapati was tired. The melody and the sight worked like a tonic in him. He stood holding to a branch, enjoying the scene.

He received a jolt when he heard a tiger roar close by. The beast was not satisfied with its

roar, it was rushing towards him upward along the slope. Vidyapati was not so good at climbing trees. He panicked and just did not know what to do.

"Bagha!" the shout came from one of the dancing maids. The tiger stopped at once. The girls giggled. "Come back!" commanded the same voice. Bagha turned and in a bound was back amidst the girls who had stopped dancing. It rolled at the feet of the one who had called it, like a pussy. She gave it a smack with her fist. She indeed outshone all the other girls of the group for her charming personality.

—To Continue





WHOSE FAULT ANYWAY?

Yogi Maheshwar had become very popular in the kingdom of Puru. People came to him from far and wide for getting their wishes fulfilled. The king too came to hear of the yogi and he was curious to see him.

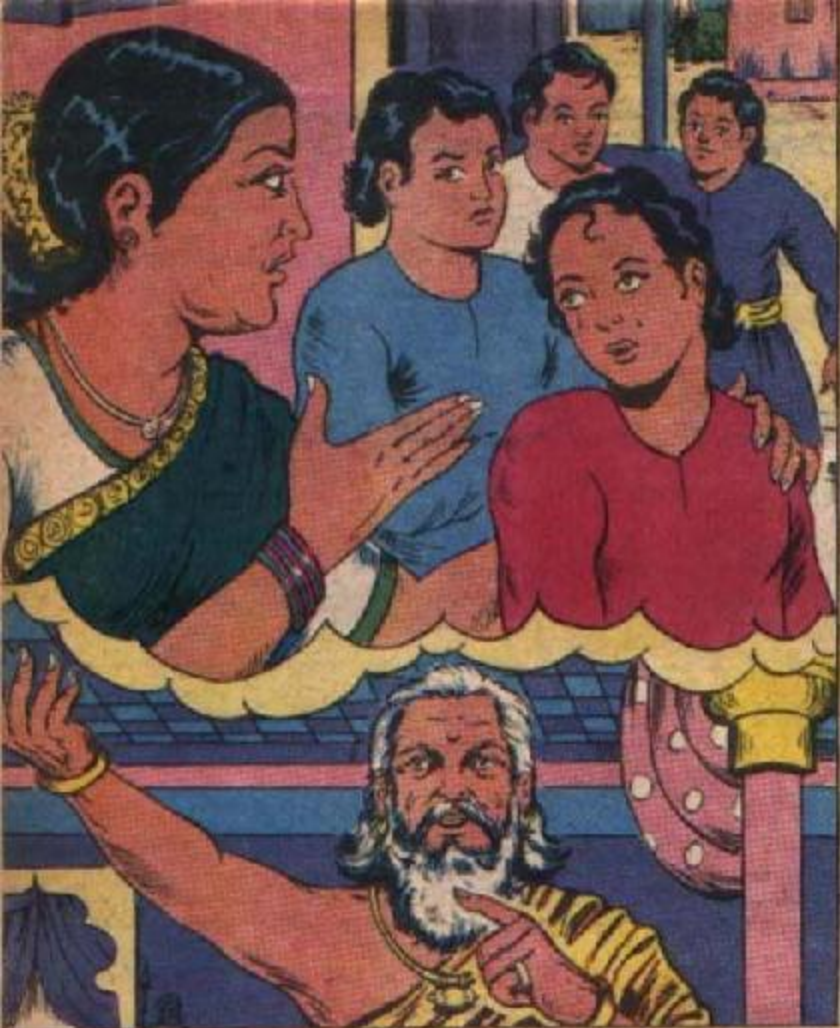
But, one day, one of the royal spies reported to the king that Maheshwar was a fraud. And he narrated several incidents which proved that the fellow was really deceiving the public.

Maheshwar and his two disciples were summoned to the king's court. The false yogi realised that he had been caught red-handed and that there was hardly any chance of escaping the punishment. But, being a very shrewd man, he argued,

"Maharaj, I agree with whatever you have said about me. I know that I am no yogi; I only pretend to be one. But, I'm not to blame! It is the people who are to blame. If they cannot distinguish between what is true and what is false, what is good and what is bad, it is their fault. If someone does not see a patch of mud and steps on it and soils his feet, will you blame the mud for it?"

"But, are you not fooling the public and making a profit by that?" asked the king.

"What is the profit, Maharaj? Just a handful of rice and few fruits. Nothing much. Moreover, it is they who come to me, I don't go to them. Instead of



asking God for granting their prayers, they come to me and worship me. It is true that once in a while a wealthy man brings costly gifts or money to me. But he does so because he has enough to squander away!" argued the false yogi.

"Look here, fellow," interrupted the chief minister to the king, "Your arguments remind me of a story. There were in a family four young boys. The youngest one was a simple-hearted boy and the elder three brothers took advantage of his nature. They teased him, cheated him and often beat him. When the mother asked them

not to do so, they replied, "Why should he not learn to defend himself? Who asks him to bear our teasing calmly?"

"The mother, instead of protecting the tender boy, asked him to retaliate or suffer! Soon the boy learnt to become aggressive. Within a few years he became so aggressive that ultimately he turned into a robber.

"When the mother died in her old age, she had to go to hell. Lord Yama told her, 'All the five fingers in a hand are not similar; each is different from the others. So also were your four sons. Instead of trying to reform the nature of your elder sons, you asked the younger child to become like them. So, you are to be blamed for what your youngest son has become today. Hence you are in hell.'

"So, you false yogi, do you understand what the story teaches us? It is a crime to take advantage of someone's goodness or innocence or even weakness. If our king expects his innocent subjects to grow crooks in order to match a crook like you, he will be no different from that foolish mother!"

The king was very happy with



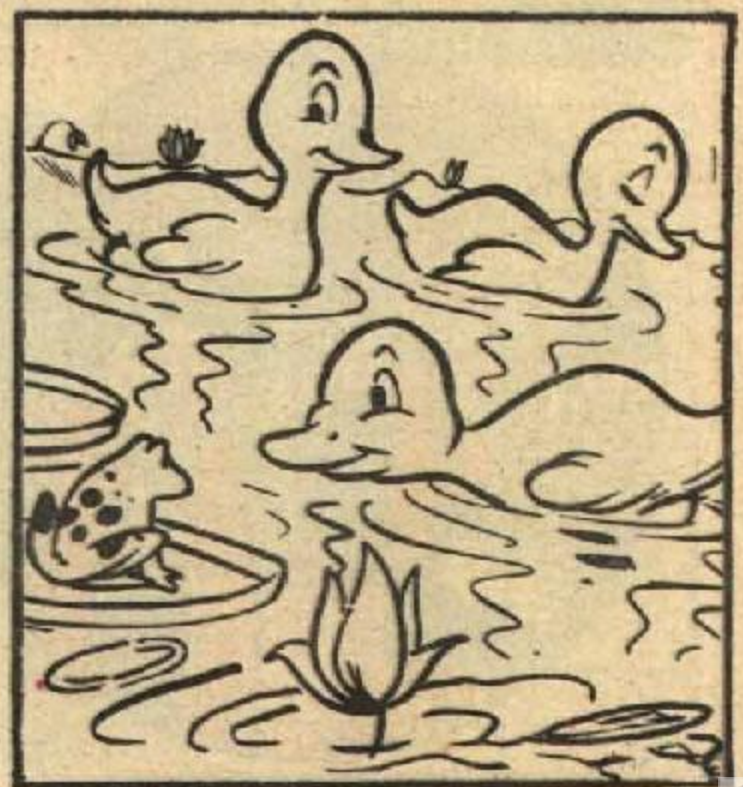
his wise minister's comment on the case.

"Mahamantri, what punishment should we award this fellow and his assistants?"

"Maharaj, these people are basically very lazy and they took

to all these tricks to earn an easy living. Let us give them the job of gardeners in the palace garden so that there they will be obliged to work hard under the chief gardener's supervision," suggested the minister. The king passed the order accordingly.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The Vizir was angry with a slave. He pleaded with the Sultan for an order to behead him. "My lord, I'm grateful to you for many things. That is why I won't like God to punish you," said the slave.



"Why should God punish me?" asked the Sultan. "Because for a small fault I'm getting death. But if you accept my suggestion, I can be killed and still God will not blame you," said the slave.



"What is it?" asked the Sultan. "Let me kill this worthy Vizir. Thereby I shall deserve death. God will find my punishment proportionate to my crime," said the slave.



"What do you say, Vizir?" asked the amused Sultan. "My lord, we better spare the life of this chap!" said the thoughtful Vizir.



Oliver Twist



Flogging hungry Oliver for asking for more food, the workhouse men finally decide to sell him. A chimney-sweep having failed to buy Oliver, the boy becomes an undertaker's apprentice and gains good experience, but confronts the teasing bully Noah there.



Noah then began insulting Oliver's dead mother, saying that she had been fit only to die in the workhouse. Crimson with fury, Oliver turned upon his tormentor and seized him by the throat and shook him until his teeth chattered in his head. Then, collecting his force in one heavy blow, he felled Noah to the ground.



Noah's shouts of fear brought Mrs. Sowerberry running to the scene. "Oh, you little wretch," screamed Mrs. Sowerberry, giving him a blow with all her might. All this commotion brought Mr. Sowerberry running into the kitchen. Grasping hold of Oliver, he looked down at Noah. "Run to Mr. Bumble, Noah, and tell him he must come here immediately."

Noah Claypole escaped from the house and ran along the streets at his swiftest pace, pausing not once for breath until he reached the workhouse gates, where, as it chanced, he found Mr. Bumble. "Oh, Mr. Bumble," Noah said. "You must come at once. Oliver has turned violent. He tried to murder me, sir."



On hearing this news, Mr. Bumble took himself with all speed to the undertaker's shop, where he found Oliver completely unrepentant. "Ain't you ashamed of what you've done," Mr. Bumble said. "And aren't you now trembling while I speak to you?" Oliver replied boldly, "No."



"He must be mad," Mrs. Sowerberry said, "No boy in half his senses could venture to speak so to you." Said Mr. Bumble, "It's not madness, Ma'am. It's meat. Too much meat. You've overfed him, Ma'am. It does you credit, of course."



Mr. Bumble then advised that the young villain should be sent to bed while he decided what should be done with him. Alone in the silence and stillness of the gloomy workshop Oliver wept for some time. Then rising to his feet, he gently slid into the cold night outside. Oliver had decided that he would flee to London, where no one, not even Mr. Bumble would ever find him.



Oliver walked until the dawn broke, when he rested by a stone, which told him it was just seventy miles from that spot to London. After he had rested Oliver got up and continued on his way. He walked twenty miles the first day; and all that time tasted nothing but the crusts of dry bread and a few draughts of water which he begged at a cottage door.

He spent another night in the bleak damp air and in the morning waited at the bottom of a steep hill until a stage coach came up. He begged of the outside passengers, but very few took any notice of him, and even those who did told him to wait until they got to the top of the hill, and then let him see how far he could run for a halfpenny.



Poor Oliver tried to keep up with the coach but was unable to do so by reason of his fatigue. When the outside passengers saw this, they put their halfpence away, feeling that he was a lazy and undeserving fellow, and the coach rolled away, leaving Oliver alone and sad.



In some villages, large painted boards were fixed up, warning all persons who begged within the district that they would be sent to jail. If he begged at a farmer's house, ten to one they would threaten to set the dog on him.

Early on the seventh morning after he had left his native place, Oliver limped into the little town of Barnet. Exhausted, he sank upon a cold door-step, where he was presently approached by a boy of about his own age. "Hello, my friend," the boy said. "What's up?" Oliver told him, "I have been walking for seven days, and I am very tired and hungry."



"Got any money?" the strange boy asked. When Oliver told him he had none, he whistled. "I've only a shilling, but I'll share it with you. Now stand up." Assisting Oliver to rise, the young gentleman took him to an adjacent shop where he bought a slice of ham and bread, which they then proceeded to devour.

To Continue



THE UNGRATEFUL GUEST

In a cave on a hill lived a fox. It was a small cave, but spacious enough for the fox. He kept the mouth of the cave shut with a stone, but for a small gap.

One night it was raining. The fox was lying comfortably in his cave when he heard the moaning of a wolf. He peeped out and saw a wolf standing on a rock below his cave, suffering the downpour.

"It is always good to have a friend among the powerful. Here is an opportunity to bef-

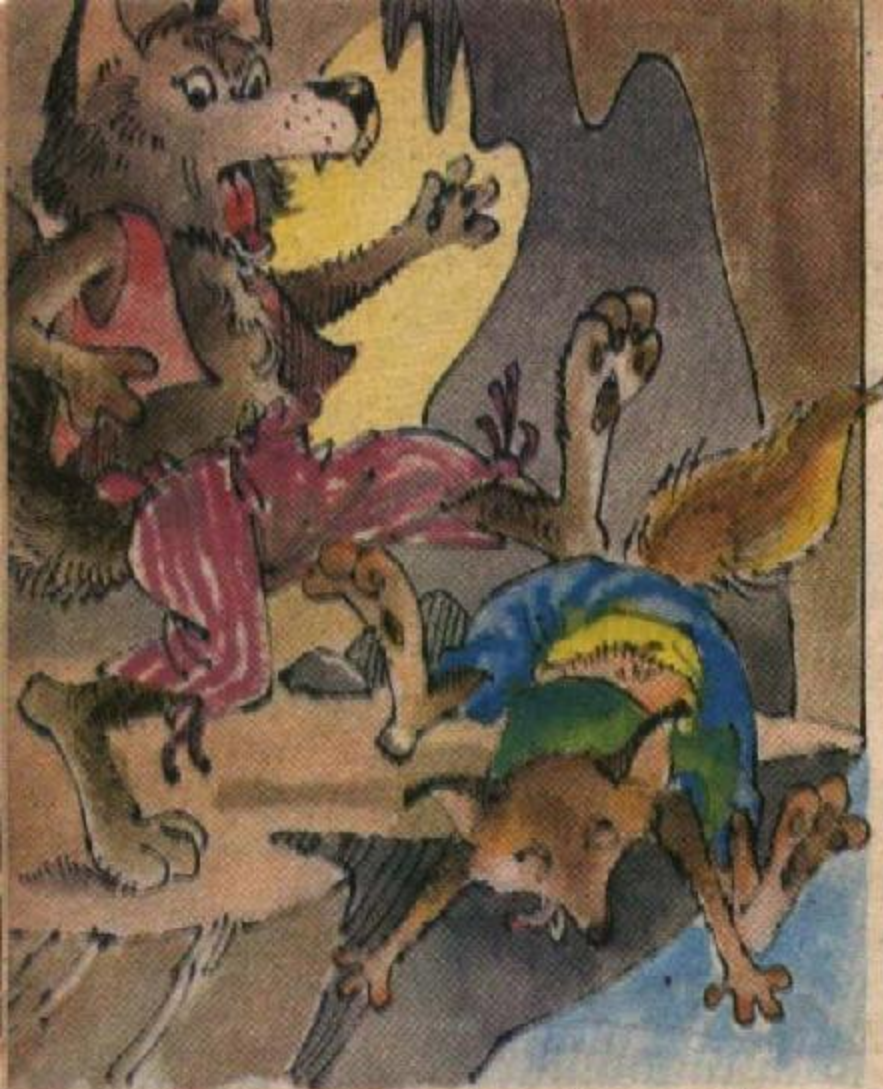
riend the wolf. It will be not only unwise but also selfish of me if I do not offer the wolf shelter," the fox told himself. Then he called out for the wolf.

The wolf, who did not know of the cave, was delighted at the call. He came up, entered the cave and slept happily.

The fox was surprised that the wolf did not utter a single word of thanks. However, he was happy to have done a good thing.

But he had to regret before





long. Next day the wolf went out even without a nod at the host and, what is worse, in the evening came back into the cave without asking for the fox's permission.

"Hello, friend, do you wish to spend another night here though it is not raining? I don't mind," said the fox.

"Who asks you whether you mind or not?" asked the wolf with a sneer.

"What I mean is, you are welcome."

"Who cares whether you welcome or not?"

The fox fell silent. But that was not the end of his discom-

fort. The wolf began ordering the fox to do this or that as if he was his slave and found fault with him every now and then.

The cave which used to be a paradise for the fox became a sort of hell for him. He did not mind sharing the cave with the wolf, but must the wolf be cruel to him?

"When do you propose to leave my cave?" one day he made bold to ask the wolf.

"Why don't you get out, you fool, you slave?" said the wolf and he planted a blow on the fox's neck.

The fox sprawled on the floor. He felt a terrible pain. The wolf gave him a kick and said, "Go and roam about and find out a farm with plenty of fruits. Come and report to me so that I will go out and eat. If you can't find out any, don't come back. If you do, I will throw you out, dead!"

The fox went out, weeping. He knew that the wolf meant what he said. Either he must spend the night in the open or must find out a farm.

He went close the village. There was a farm which he often visited. He went near it and was pleased to see an opening in the

fence. Generally he had to try hard to enter it through thorns in the fence.

But he stopped. Why should the farmer leave an opening in the fence? He looked carefully. He saw a pit at the opening, carefully covered by straws and leaves. He would have fallen into it had he taken a step more.

The discovery gave him an idea. He returned to his cave at once and told the wolf that he had found the farm for his exploration. He told him where the farm was situated.

"Guide me there!" commanded the wolf.

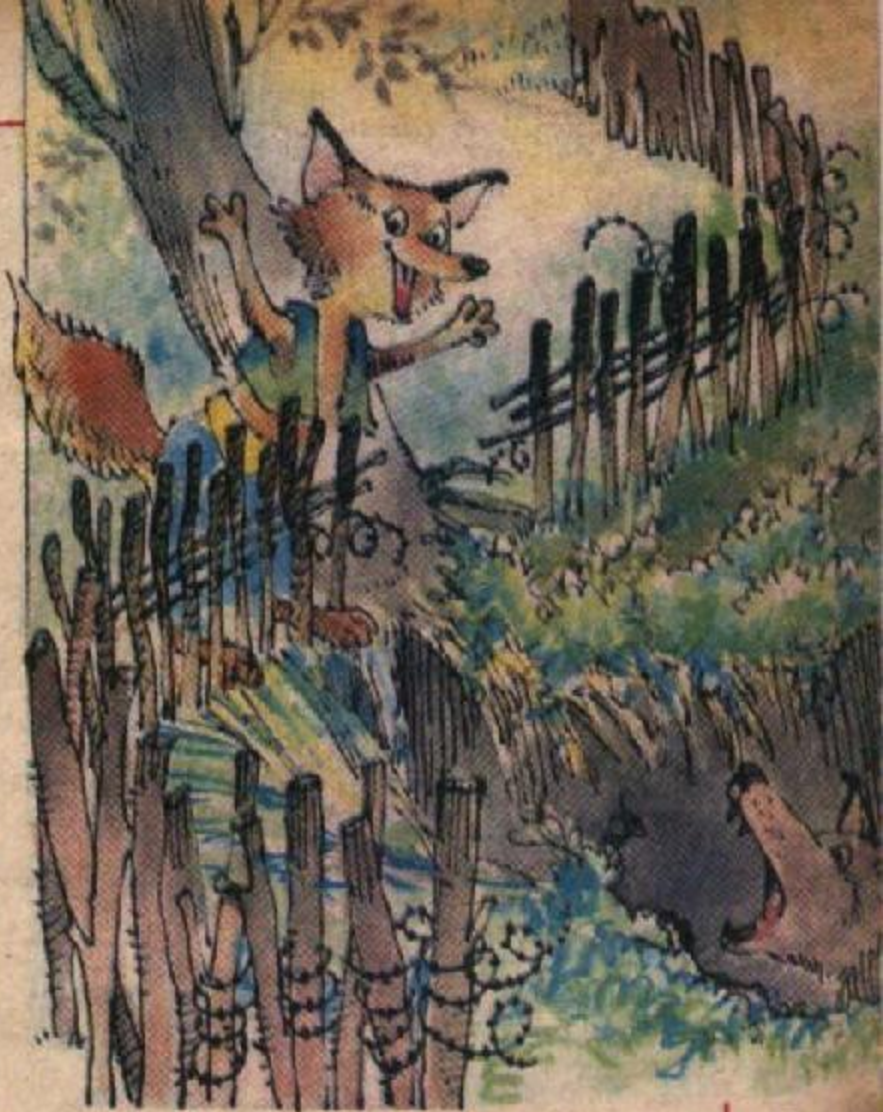
The fox was tired. But what could he do? He showed the wolf the way.

He stopped before the pit and drew the wolf's attention to the farm teeming with different fruits. "Go ahead and enjoy to your heart's content," said the fox.

"I will. You be here and give a signal to me if you see any human being coming this way. Don't touch any fruit until..."

The wolf had not finished passing his order when he crashed into the pit.

The fox could not contain his joy. He looked into the pit and



laughed and asked, "Can I touch any fruit now?"

It took some time for the wolf to understand his own predicament. The fox kept on laughing. He had never laughed so heartily.

"My dear fox, I am really a rogue who has been very discourteous to you! But in future I will behave. You came to my rescue when I was miserable in rain. You must come to my rescue once again," pleaded the wolf.

"Don't think yourself so clever, wolf! I am not so big a fool to be moved by your false regrets. Be where you are till the farmer

comes to your rescue!" replied the fox.

But the wolf went on praying to him to save him until the fox's heart melted.

"How do you think can I help you?" asked the fox.

"All I need is a little support. Hold on to that tree and throw your tail into the pit. I will catch it only for a moment and then in a leap be outside the pit."

The fox did as advised. But the wolf gave a strong pull to his tail and brought him down into the pit.

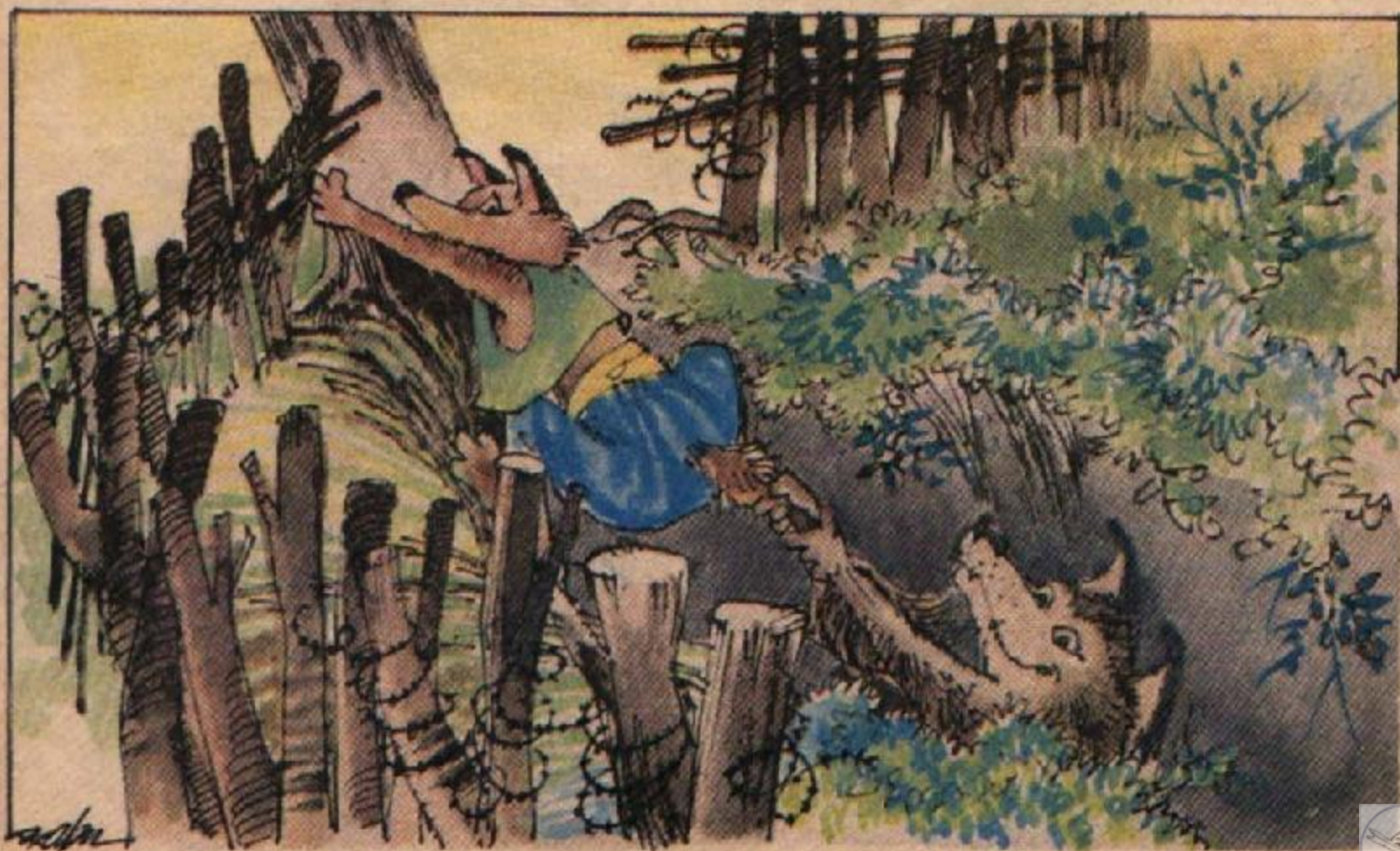
"I know that I can never go up by holding on to your tail. All I wanted was to drag you into it. My fond wish is to see

you dead before I die," said the wolf. He then gave a brutal blow to the fox.

"Wait, wait, I think I hear footsteps of men!" cautioned the fox.

The wolf stood on his hind legs and stretched himself up as much as possible to listen to any such sound. Instantly the fox leaped up to the wolf's shoulder and then, in another leap, was outside the pit.

He straight went up a mound and began to howl till the farmer and his men had been attracted to the spot. He then slipped away quietly, leaving them to find out what was there inside the pit!



ANDHAKA

NARADA HANDLES A DEMON

Andhaka means one who is blind. But far from being blind, the demon who bore this name could grow two thousand eyes if he so wished. He could also develop a thousand hands at will.

Why was he then called Andhaka? It was because he had been blinded by his pride. He acted violently and cruelly. Harassed sages and gods did not know how to put an end to the menace. They approached Narada and sought his help.

In the inaccessible Mandara hills there bloomed a kind of flower, also called the Mandara, which was remarkable for its fragrance. Narada put on a garland of the Mandara flowers and passed by the demon's dwelling.

The unfamiliar fragrance drew Andhaka out of his castle. "Where to get such flowers?" he asked.

"In the Mandara hills. That is where I obtained them," replied a smiling Narada.

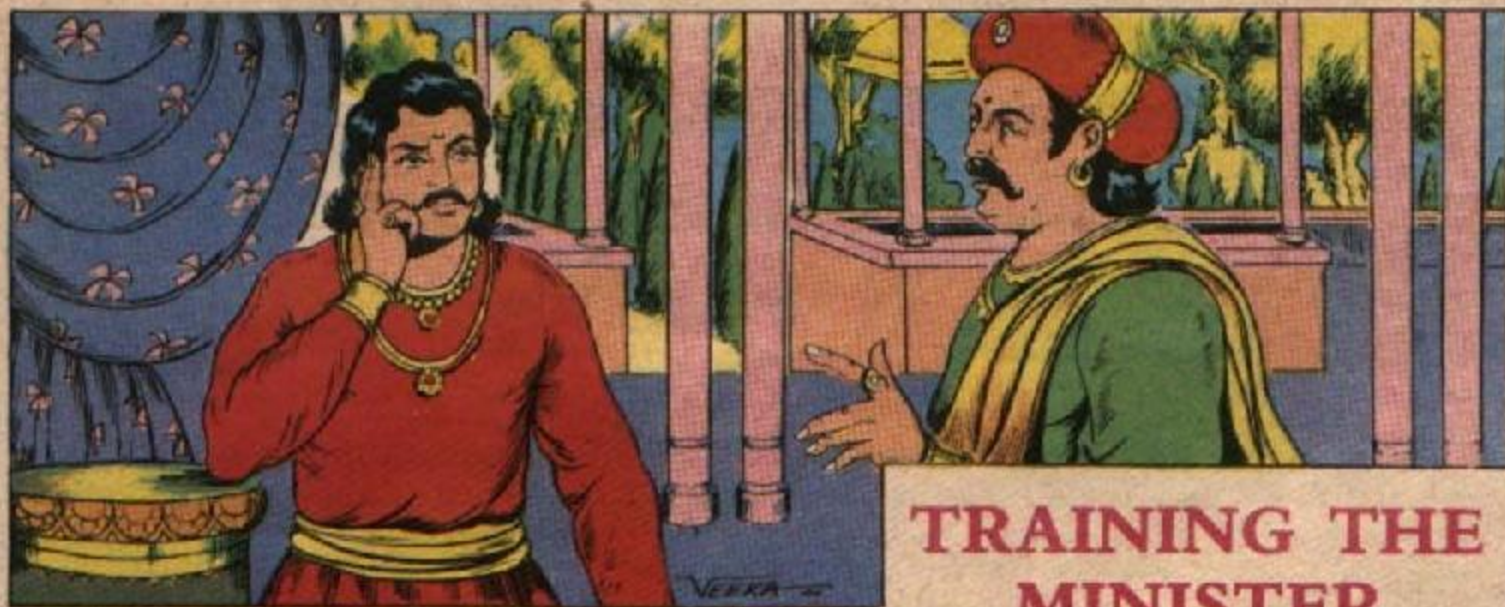
Andhaka set out for the Mandara hills. Now, the region belonged to Lord Siva. Only a devotee of either Siva or Vishnu could enter that region, none else.

Andhaka, as already told, was blinded by his ego. He dared into the region with his arrogant strides.

At once Siva threw his trident at him. The demon was toppled from the peak he had just climbed. He gave out a terrific shriek, but that was the last noise he made!

(Primary source: **The Harivamsa**)





TRAINING THE MINISTER

Everyone cheered the appointment of the young minister. Chaitanya was known to be very generous and wise. The people of the kingdom felt that the king had chosen the right man as his prime minister.

A few weeks after his taking over the responsibility, Chaitanya was shocked to discover one day that the revenues of the king had dwindled very much. After thinking over various alternatives, he decided that the quickest way to replenish the revenues was to impose new taxes.

When the king heard his plan, he felt happy and gave his approval. "You can go ahead with your plan to improve our revenue, but, only take care not to announce yourself the raise in the taxes. Let the revenue officers do the job," advised the

king.

The minister was puzzled: Why didn't the king want to give him the credit for such a good plan? However, he decided to keep quiet and to act on the king's advice.

After a few months, the prime minister felt curious to know for himself the success of his plan. He had heard good reports of it from his officers, but, he wanted to know what the people thought about it.

When he told about his anxiety to the king, he suggested, "Why not we go ourselves in disguise to different parts of the kingdom and see for ourselves the people's reactions to your plan? I am also keen to learn if they are facing any other difficulties."

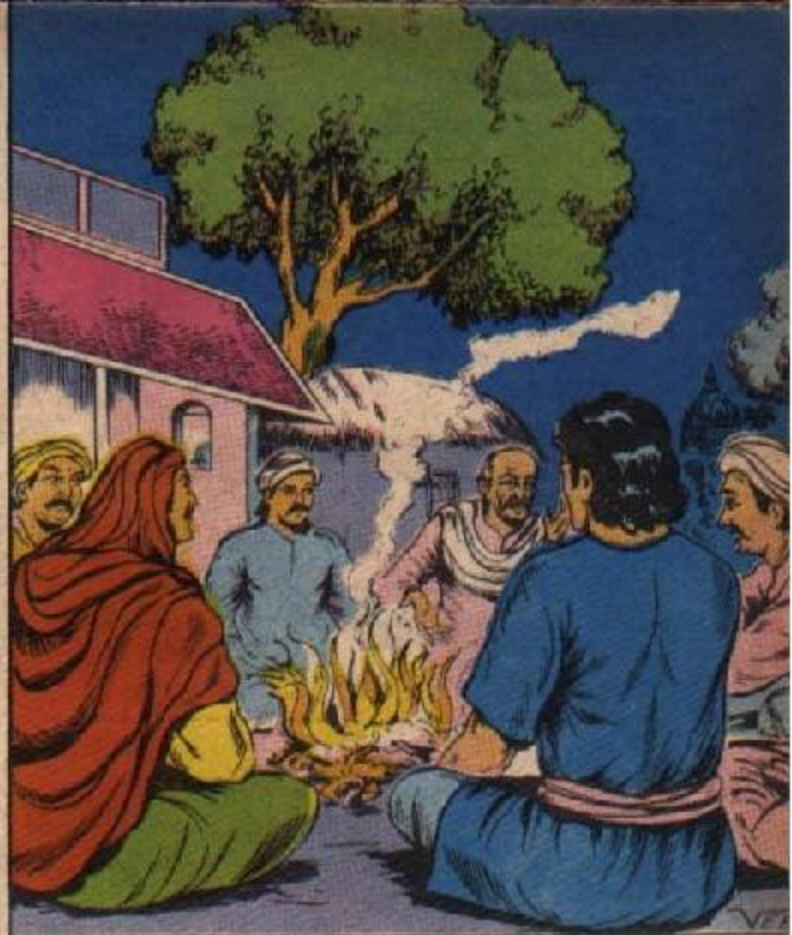
So, the next evening, both the king and the prime minister set

out, disguised as merchants. They spoke to different groups of people in the villages, in the market areas and in different offices. The one common strain of all their talks was the complaint about the taxes. People felt too overburdened by the sudden raise in the taxes. They cursed the revenue officers. They felt a need to send a plea to the king and to ask for his intervention.

Chaitanya felt very ill at ease on hearing all the complaints of the people. He could not sleep that night. He kept thinking about the people's woes.

Next day, he went to the king's chamber early morning and said, "Maharaja, I feel very pained to hear the woes of our people. I feel that I am responsible for it to a certain extent. So, I suggest that we withdraw the new taxes. We have sufficient revenue now. I shall ask the revenue officers to announce the withdrawal right away, of course, with your permission."

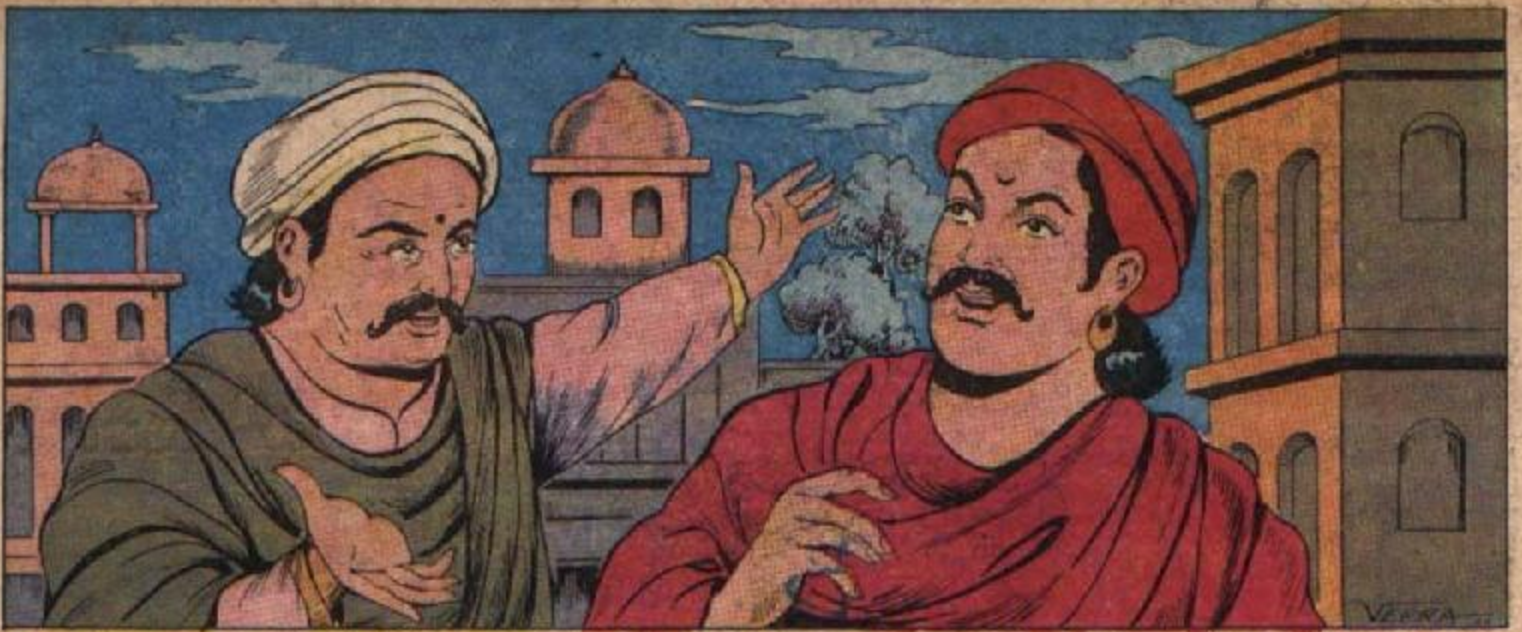
"Chaitanya, I'm very happy with your suggestion. You can withdraw the extra taxes. But, the announcement about the withdrawal should not be left to the revenue officers. You



should announce it," advised the king.

Chaitanya was once again puzzled. "Why so, Maharaja? Last time you wanted them to announce the raise in the taxes, but, now..."

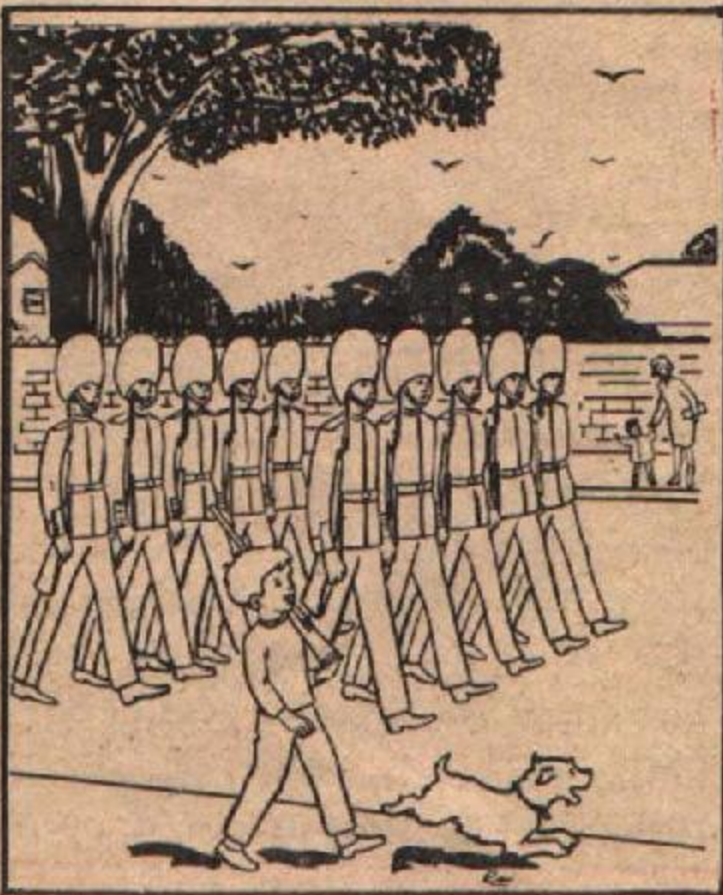
"Precisely, Chaitanya," said the king. "Last time, if you had announced the raise, the people would have blamed you for it and not the officers. But now, if you announce the withdrawal and give them the good news, they will all praise you and it will be a reassurance of their faith in your wisdom and generosity. I do not want you to fall from their esteem. You will

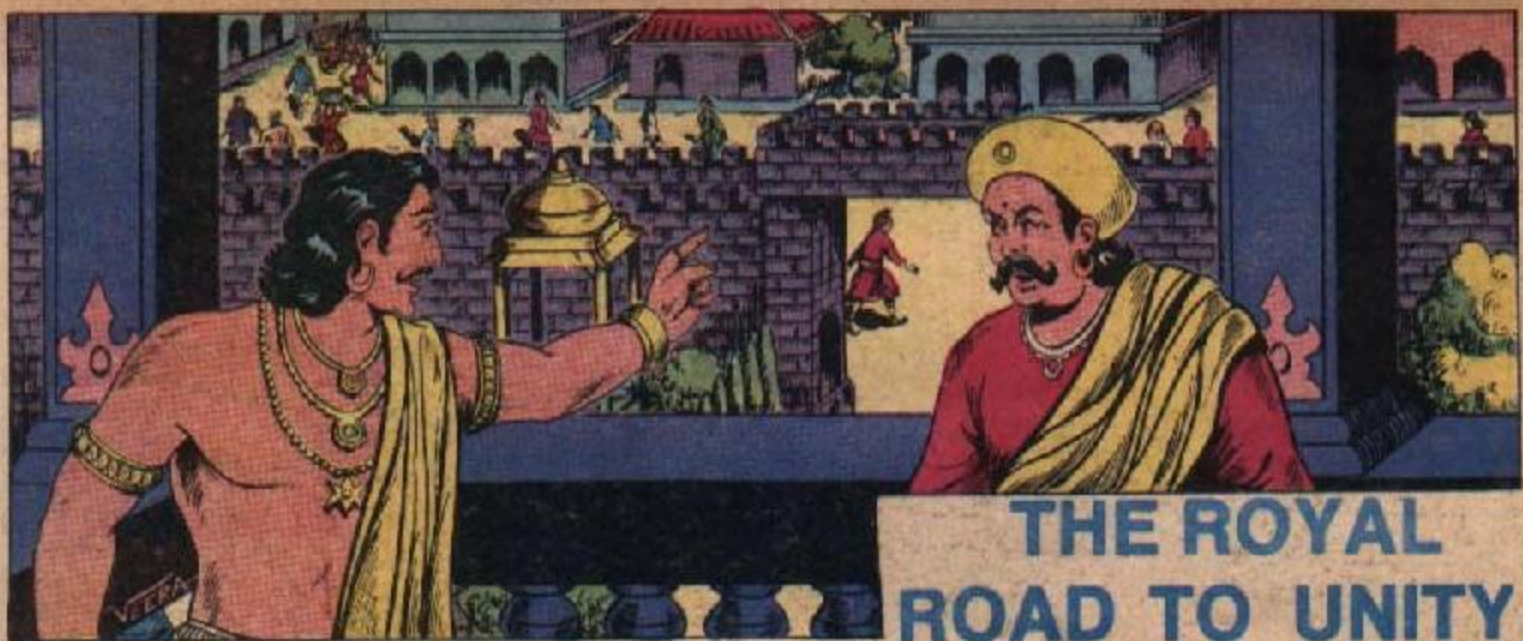


have to face many more problems in the future and it is important that they have full trust in you. Do you understand my strategy?" said the king with a smile.

Chaitanya felt grateful to the king and paying him respects with a deep bow he left the chamber and went straight to the court to announce the good news.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





THE ROYAL ROAD TO UNITY

Long ago there was a king named Mihirvarma. He was very proud of his own wisdom and therefore he did not take any advice from his ministers. He ruled his country just as he thought best. Most often his decisions would be wrong and the people had to suffer, until, one day...

One day the king was taking a stroll on his palace roof. From there he saw his subjects moving about in the streets below, all happy and gay. Their dress showed bright different colours and fanciful styles. He suddenly had an inspiration and he called up his chief minister.

"My Minister!" shouted the king in an agitated tone, "Look at the people in the streets: those different colours of dresses, the fanciful styles, their different languages... I just

can't stand all that. There must be a complete unity in my kingdom. Henceforth everyone in my kingdom must wear the same clothes, of the same colours; talk in the same language; worship the same god and behave in a similar manner. That is my order! Go now and execute it!"

The chief minister stood aghast. He could not believe what he heard. However, he did not dare to utter even a word against the king's order because he knew the wrathful nature of his master. Even then he managed to murmur, "But my lord, how can the poor dress like your officers?"

The king had no answer to this. But he was not the man to go back on his decision. He amended his order slightly. "All right," he said, "Let all those in

one walk of life wear the same kind of clothes. For example, all the ladies in the palace must dress in one way; all the members of the court must dress in the same way. In any case, I want all of you, my courtiers, to speak exactly as I speak and nothing different from what I say."

The minister nodded and left.

The king felt more and more proud as the days went by. "No one in the world," he thought, "has had such a brilliant idea. What a beautiful and united kingdom I shall have. One god, one language, same dress, same manners! My name shall become the brightest name in history. I've at last gained immortality!"

After a few weeks the king was eager to see how his novel policy worked. He went into his garden and he was shocked to see that all the rose plants had vanished. There was only the bright green lawn. He wanted to take to task the chief gardener, but, he could not call for him. That is because every one of the gardeners was dressed in silk robes!

He rushed into the queen's palace in order to scold her for

her fanciful ideas about the garden. He was again shocked at what he saw: everyone in the palace, from the maid-servants to the queen, was dressed in beautiful linen drapes, wearing even similar ornaments. The king could not recognise his own queen!

Puffing in anger, he strode to his court in order to punish the chief minister for giving the maid servants the liberty to dress like a queen. But, where was the chief minister in that group of men who were all dressed like the chief minister? The king was puzzled. The sense of helplessness increased his anger.

"Chief Minister!" he yelled out.

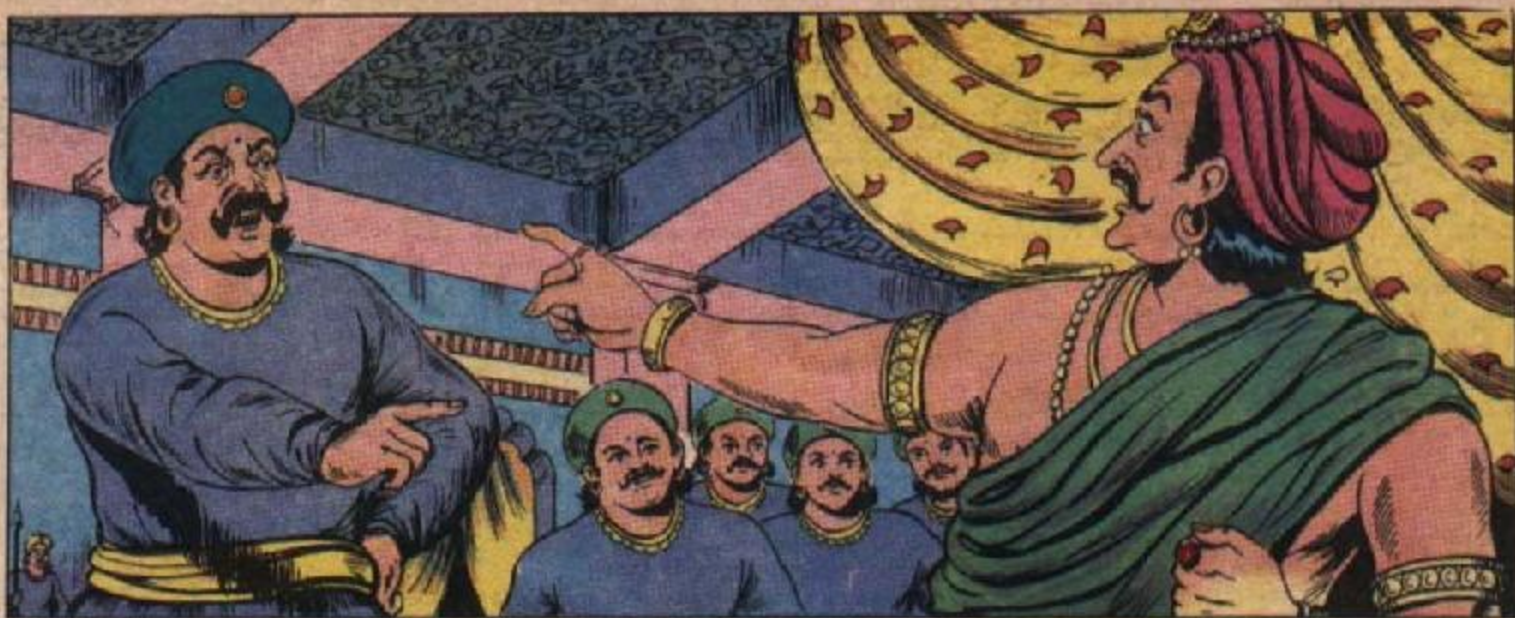
"Chief Minister!" repeated court.

"How dare you mimic me like that!" shouted the king. "You'll be beheaded for your impertinence!"

"How dare you call me..." the chief minister repeated like a parrot.

Suddenly, the mystery of the situation dawned upon the king; he realised his own stupidity. He returned to his chamber, all





ashamed of himself and his pride and his self-confidence. He had been taught a good lesson, he thought.

The very next day the orders were reversed.

Once again the streets of his kingdom were full of colour, his garden had lovely roses and the most important thing of all was that once again he could recognise his own queen!



The sage told the people, "You want rain, do you? Then gather near the mountain tomorrow in the afternoon. We will pray together. If you have the complete faith that God will listen to your prayer, there will be a heavy downpour."

People gathered near the mountain the next day. "Are you sure that you have the complete faith?" the sage asked them.

"Oh yes," the people replied in a chorus.

"Are you sure? How is it that even one of you did not bring an umbrella?"

There was no reply.

"Pray for faith this time. For rain, afterwards," said the sage.

The Season Of Slaughter

During the first few weeks of their young lives, baby seals are in danger from the hunters who kill them and take their coats for the fur trade

Baby seals wriggle on the ice, their soft cream coats shining in the Arctic sun. They are beautiful, with large brown eyes and gentle faces.

Within a few weeks, their coats will turn to brown—if they live that long. Every year, hundreds of thousands of seals are killed for their creamy baby fur to make coats for wealthy women.

During a short season which lasts from March until the end of April, almost a whole population of infant seals fails to live more than a week or so. Their lives end when the hunters arrive with their clubs and knives to kill and skin them.

The hunters are paid for the skins of the seals and also for their fat. The fishermen also say that seals, if they were not killed, would destroy the local fishing grounds by preying upon the fish.

A group of conservationists, known as Greenpeace, is trying to stop the slaughter, which takes place in Newfoundland, by calling for a boycott of Canadian products.

Their argument is that, at the turn of the century, there were probably 20 million seals in the region. Now there are one million. In five to ten years, seals could be virtually extinct there.

The seals endangered are harp and hood seals. They are Arctic members of the seal family. Like all seals, they are mammals and need to return to the shore each year to produce their young.

The family of true seals includes the common seal found around Britain and the elephant seal which grows to a length of more than six metres and weighs four tons. All seals are flesh-eaters and feed on fish, crabs and other marine creatures.

Clumsy on Land

While they are agile in the water, they are clumsy on land. But as the seal spends most of

its life in the water, its awkwardness on land is not a handicap...except when there are hunters around.

A true seal has no earflaps, its ears being practically invisible. Yet, it is believed to have good hearing and to be able to pick up sounds and vibrations from its prey when hunting beneath the water.

Its arms are useless on land, when the seal has to drag itself along by its sharp-nailed forelimbs and an awkward, swaying movement of the body.

It would be difficult to think of anything more clumsy than the slow progress of the huge elephant seal over sand or rock. In contrast, it is graceful as any fish in the water.

Seals are an example of mammals perfectly adapted to life in the sea. It is possible for them to spend several minutes under water before surfacing for more air.

Before diving, a seal fills its lungs with air. As its heart beats more slowly when the seal is below the surface, the air is used up less quickly.

A seal can even doze under water, but it has to wake up every ten minutes and swim to the surface for another lungful of air.

Seals which live in cold water are protected against low temperatures by a thick layer of fat.

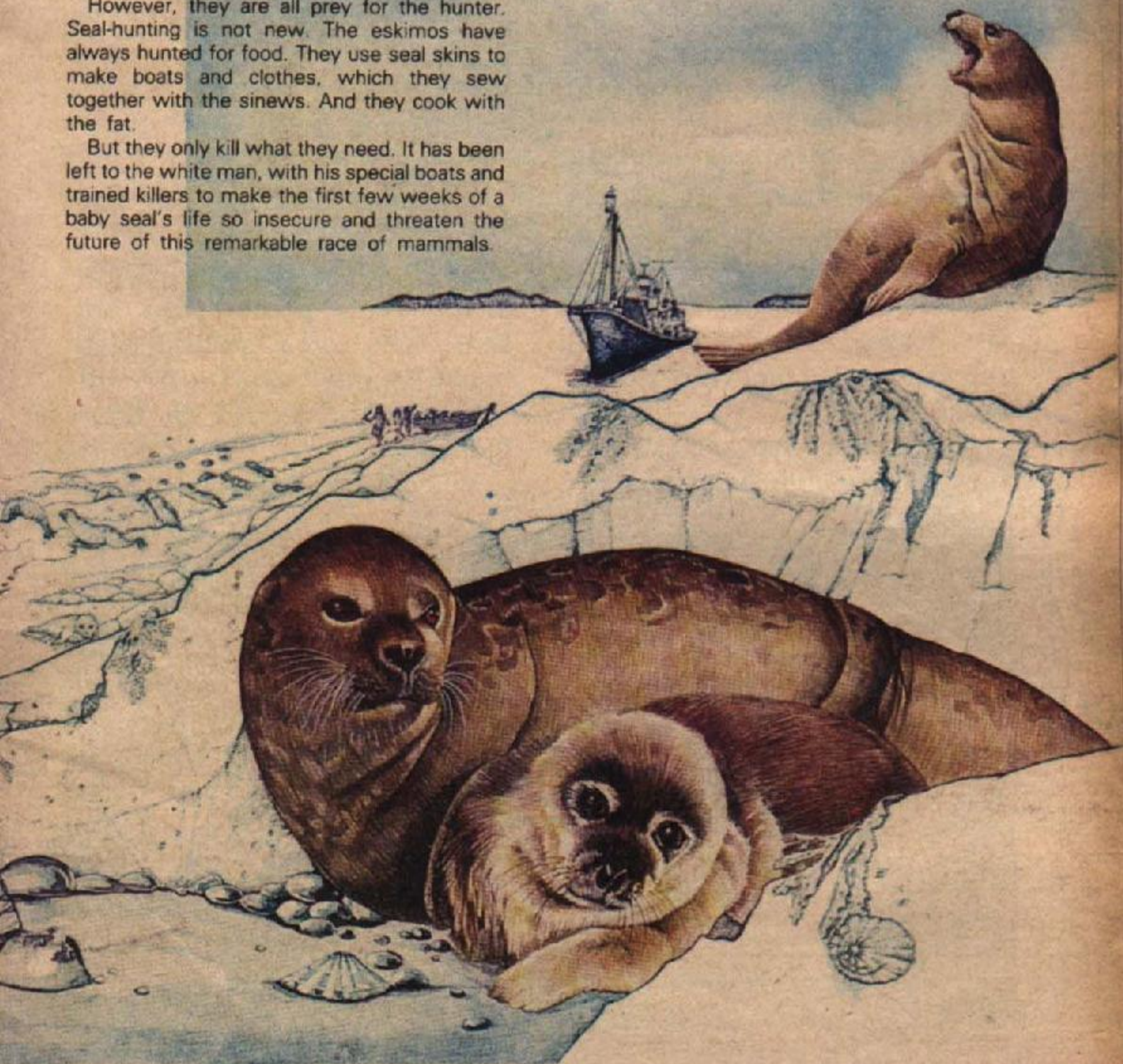


This is not necessary for the seals which live in warmer seas. Some have even been found in the tropics.

They share these varied homes with their relations, the sea-lions and the fur seals. These have visible ears, a characteristic which distinguishes them from true seals

However, they are all prey for the hunter. Seal-hunting is not new. The eskimos have always hunted for food. They use seal skins to make boats and clothes, which they sew together with the sinews. And they cook with the fat.

But they only kill what they need. It has been left to the white man, with his special boats and trained killers to make the first few weeks of a baby seal's life so insecure and threaten the future of this remarkable race of mammals.



A WISE DISCIPLE

In a forest lived a hermit. He had picked up an abandoned child from the outskirts of the forest and had nurtured it. The child grew up to be a young man and was called Govind.

Govind was humble and intelligent. The hermit gave him lessons in Yoga and scriptures. He learnt them well.

From time to time he asked the hermit, "Master! How do the people in the villages and towns live?"

The hermit tried to explain to him how people lived in their

worldly life. One day he asked Govind, "My son, why don't you go and enjoy the pleasures of life?"

"How can I, Master? I have no means for doing that!" answered Govind.

"Go and meet the king and tell him that I have sent you to him. He is the richest man just as you are the poorest man. But he will give you all you will need to live happily," said the hermit.

Govind proceeded to meet the king.

When he reached the palace,



the king was in the shrine alone, offering his prayers. Govind was allowed to go near the shrine because he came from the hermit for whom the king had great respect.

As Govind sat on the verandah of the shrine, he could hear the king saying to the deity in his prayers: "O Lord, kindly grant me more wealth, more fame and more power!"

Govind quietly got up and came out of the palace. "O young hermit, won't you wait? The king will come out of the shrine very soon!" said some officials of the palace.

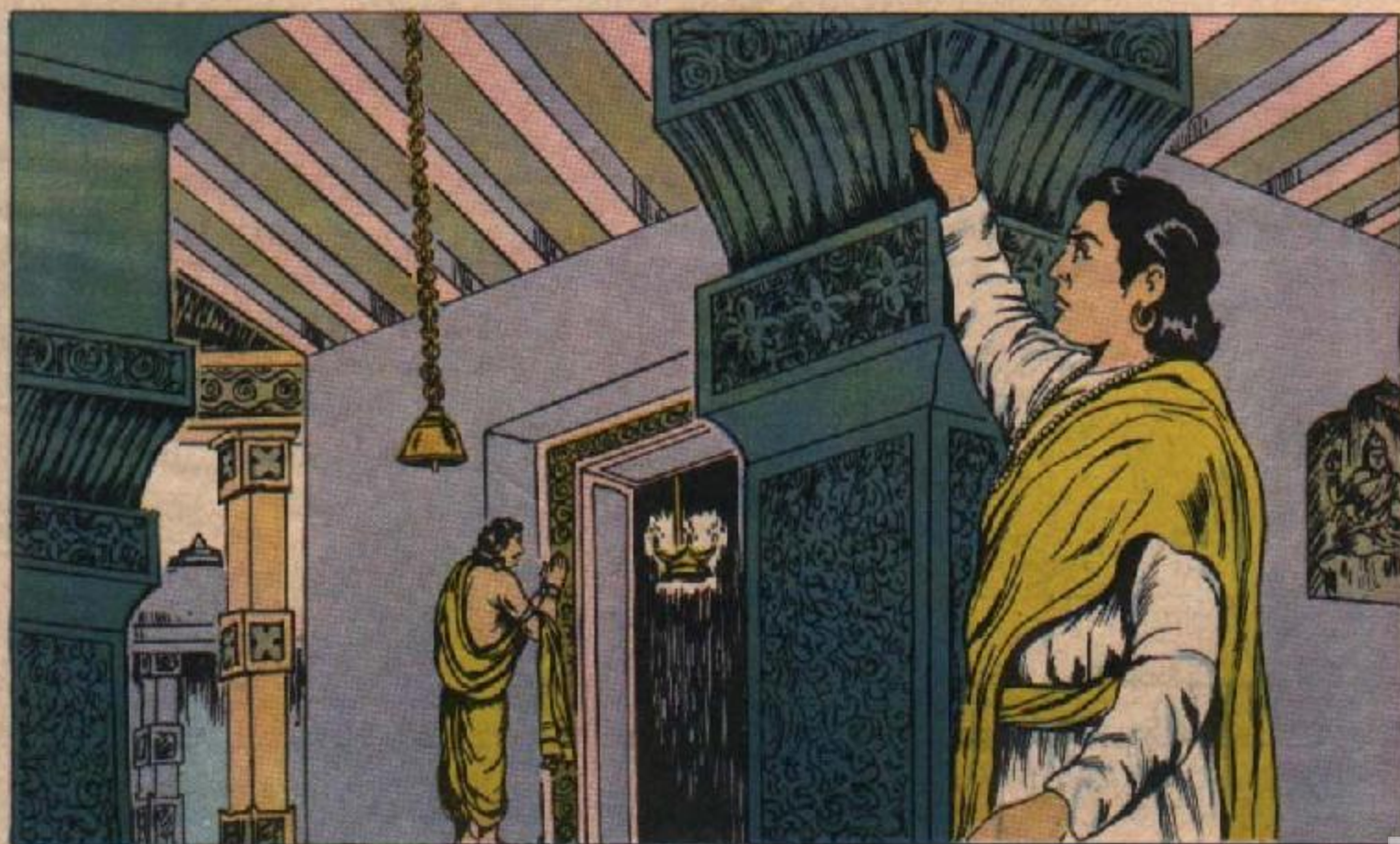
But Govind was in no mood to listen to them. He made a

beeline for the hermitage in the forest.

"What happened? Why did you come back?" asked the hermit.

"Master, how can I beg anything of a beggar? I heard the king asking the Lord for more money. How can I ask him for money? Besides, if he is not happy with all the money he has, how can I be happy with the money he would give me? Moreover, why should I not pray to the same Lord to give me whatever He thinks to be good for me?" said Govind in one breath.

"You are wise, my son!" said the hermit with a kind smile.



WAS IT BETRAYAL?

Ramlal and Vijay Gupta were both merchants belonging to Vishnupur.

Suddenly they met at Kantipur. Both were there for trade, but Ramlal had come by his big boat whereas Vijay Gupta had come by the land route.

"Why not give me company by sea?" proposed Ramlal. Gupta agreed. He and his three assistants got into Ramlal's boat.

Inside his cabin Ramlal showed two diamonds to Vijay Gupta. "These are the most precious things I have obtained. What to do if we are confronted by pirates?" he asked.

"Keep them tied to your waist," advised Gupta. Accordingly Ramlal tied the diamonds to his waist.

It so happened that pirates raided their boat the very next day. They plundered the boat, but they did not get much. The pirate-chief brandished a dagger before Ramlal and Gupta and said, "Now I must search your persons to see if you are hiding anything."

Gupta looked at Ramlal and said, "My brother, our safety is more important than our wealth. Better surrender those diamonds of ours you are hiding under your clothes!"

Ramlal, on the verge of weeping, gave away his two diamonds.

As soon as the pirates left, he demanded of Gupta, "How could you betray me?"

Gupta did not answer him immediately. He brought out a small pouch that remained tied to his own waist and opened it. There were twenty pieces of diamonds in it.

"My brother, had I not disclosed your diamonds, the pirate would have searched both of us and taken away all this. These are costlier diamonds than those two lost. Now, please pick up any four for yourself," said Vijay Gupta.



New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire

THE WHIMSICAL PRINCE

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of thunderclaps and moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of ghosts. Flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, are you sure of the fruits of your labour? What will be your reaction if the result is not according to your expectation? I hope, you will not behave like the Prince of Sougandha! Well, let me narrate to you that story. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Rupsen was the name of the Prince of Sougandha. He was a great lover of music, though he did not sing himself.





One day, while enjoying a stroll in his garden, the prince heard a sweet strain of music coming from a house adjacent to the palace. He asked a palace guard to find out who the singer was.

On receiving the guard's report, he summoned the singer. She was Chandrawati, a palace maid.

"Chandrawati! I never knew that you sing so well! Who is the poet of the lyric and who set it to tune?" asked the surprised prince.

Chandrawati blushed and said, "Your Highness, there is a scholarly musician named

Yadugupta in this city. Once I heard him singing this song. It stuck on to my memory firmly."

Prince Rupsen summoned Yadugupta and recited the first line of the song and asked, "Is it your composition?"

"Your Highness, I set the lyric to music, true, but the lyric was written by my friend Ramshankar," replied Yadugupta.

Ramshankar, of course, was a well-known poet. The prince called him and congratulated him for the lyric, while he congratulated Yadugupta for the charming tune to which he had set the lyric.

But Ramshankar said with humility, "Your Highness, if anybody deserves congratulations for the lyric, it is my friend Sudhir the artist. One of his paintings inspired me to compose this piece."

"Well, I'll like to see the painting that has been the cause of such a wonderful lyric!" said the prince. He requested Ramshankar to ask Sudhir to bring the painting to him.

Sudhir the artist came to the palace carrying the painting. It was the portrait of a young lady. Prince Rupsen gazed at it for long, too charmed to speak.



"O great artist, have you drawn this out of your imagination?" he asked at last.

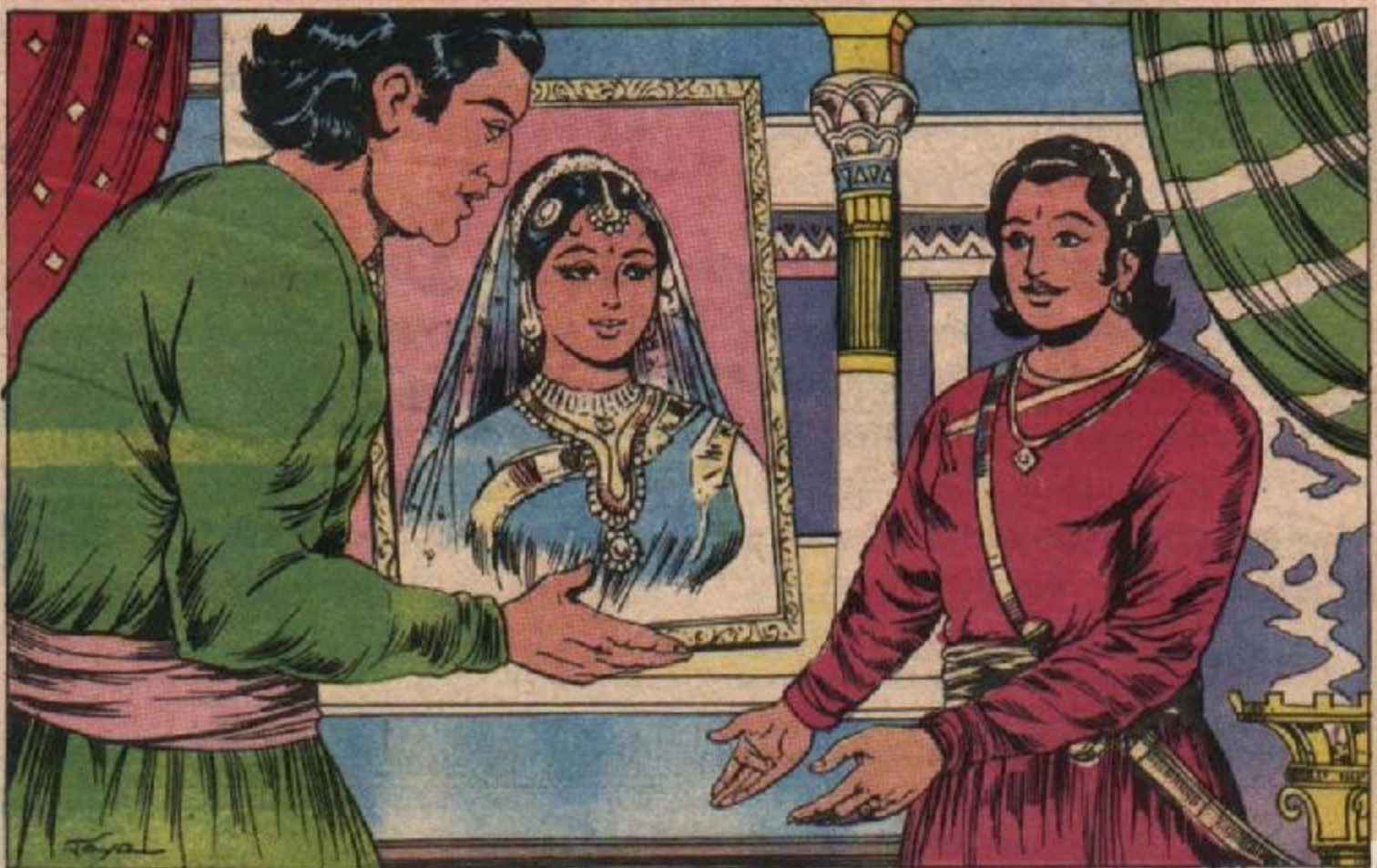
"No, Your Highness, this is a portrait of Manjari, the daughter of the chieftain of Suvarnapur," replied the artist.

Suvarnapur was a small state on the border of Sougarndha. The prince knew that the chieftain of Suvarnapur will be only too happy to give his daughter in marriage to him. He sent two emissaries to the chieftain with the proposal.

The emissaries were back on the fourth day with the report that Manjari had already been married the previous week to

the son of a landlord who belonged to Rajpur, a neighbouring kingdom. The report drove the prince into a rage. Although Rupsen was yet to ascend the throne, his father was bed-ridden and he was ruling the kingdom. On the heat of anger he did something quite unworthy of any prince: he threw Chandrawati the maid, Yadugupta the musician, Ramshankar the poet and Sudhir the painter all into jail. He said that these people enhanced his curiosity only to disappoint him! Well, nobody dared to argue with the prince.

Some months passed. There





was a festival in Rajpur. The King of Rajpur invited Prince Rupsen to witness it.

The prince went to Rajpur and enjoyed the different programmes of the festival very much.

On the last day of the festival a young lady sang before a select audience. Prince Rupsen gave a start as soon as his eyes fell on the lady. He was left in no doubt that she was Manjari.

He heard Manjari's devotional songs with great attention. He had never known such melody and sweetness before. He asked his host in a whisper, "Who is she?"

"She is Manjari, she is married to a nobleman of our kingdom who is a poet. Manjari is gifted with many virtues. Will you like to talk to her?" asked the king of Rajpur.

"I should deem it a privilege to talk to her," said Prince Rupsen.

The host arranged for their meeting. Manjari came to the palace the next day in the company of her husband.

Prince Rupsen put a number of questions to her. They were about the different modes of music, the element of devotion in music and about the attitude with which one should sing and with which one should listen to music.

Manjari answered every question distinctly. Her wisdom, knowledge and humility charmed the prince.

He returned to his kingdom the next day. The very first thing he did was to go to the prison. He not only released those whom he had thrown into jail in anger, but also apologised to them and gave them compensation.

The vampire paused for a moment and then asked King Vikram in a challenging tone



“O King, Prince Rupsen had jailed those people out of frustration when he could not marry Manjari. There was no change in that condition of frustration. Why then did he release them? There was no question of his getting Manjari ever. What changed his mind? Answer me, O King, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your capacity to answer, your head would roll off your neck.”

Forthwith replied the king, “If Manjari’s beauty had inflamed passion in the prince, her character and conduct inflamed conscience and nobility in him. Manjari was beautiful, but her nobility was greater than her beauty. The prince had first

acted under the influence of her beauty. Next he acted under the influence of her character.

“We must remember that the prince was a great lover of music. Manjari had inspired an artist to paint her portrait, the painting had inspired a poet to write a lyric, the lyric had inspired a musician to set it to music. In the imagination of the prince, Manjari was the source of that music. So he wanted to have her. When he did not get her, he acted madly. It was a temporary madness. Soon he got over it.”

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

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The Young and the Aged

Sudhakar was the landlord of the village Juloor. He had had his early education in Bhagyanagar city, but, he preferred to settle down in his village. He got married at an early age and with his wife Vasanthi, spent his days in peace and contentment.

Everyone in the village was very happy with Sudhakar. He was broad-hearted and full of sympathy for the needy.

Sudhakar travelled by a bullock-cart whenever he went out of his village. And always, he hired Ravi's bullock-cart.

Once, when he was on his way to a neighbouring village, he asked, "Ravi, aren't your two sons earning well enough by now? Why do you have to work so hard at your old age?"

"Sir, both my sons are earn-

ing very well. But, their wealth is not mine! I shall earn my own living as long as there is strength in my muscles. It gives me satisfaction," replied Ravi.

Sudhakar remembered his own father. The humble man had taken great pains to secure higher education for Sudhakar. Sudhakar wanted to do everything he could in order to make his father happy in his old age. Once, his father had told him, "My son, when you grow up and manage the family, I shall just relax and spend my days in peace." But, unfortunately, his father had died before he could do anything about it. So, a deep longing remained in Sudhakar's heart.

One day, while he was passing through the streets of his village, he came across an old



man selling some sweetmeats. Sudhakar went to him and asked, "I've seen you sitting here day after day and selling your sweetmeats. How much do you earn per day?"

"Sir," replied the old man, "I sell things worth ten rupees and I make a profit of two rupees on that."

"All right, here is the amount of ten rupees. Give me all your sweetmeats. I request you to go home and take rest."

The old man was too happy to do so.

Sudhakar did the same the next day and the day after. After a week, the old man

asked, "Sir, how long will you do like this? Not for ever, surely!"

"As long as you live, I shall buy off all your sweetmeats every day," replied Sudhakar. His deep longing to help his own father was perhaps getting to be fulfilled in this way.

After about a month, one day, the old man said, "Sir, kindly let me sell my sweetmeats, sitting here the whole day. Do not buy them off me!"

Sudhakar, surprised, asked, "Why, what happened?"

"If I return home early, my son gives me hard work for the day, just to keep me occupied. I



would prefer to sit here the whole day than to work like that," pleaded the old man.

"If that is the reason, then, come with me to my house. I shall take care of you," proposed Sudhakar in a tone that was most sincere.

And both left for the landlord's house.

After two days, the old man's son, Mahesh, came to Sudhakar's house, looking for his father. "What, father! What are you doing here? Are you not ashamed of becoming a burden on this gentleman who is no relation of yours!"

Sudhakar came out of his room and said to Mahesh, "Are you not ashamed of heaping burdens on him being his dearest relation? Must he sit in the sharp sun all through the

day? Is it not your duty to look after him in his old age?"

"Sir, whatever money my father earns, I spend on him only!" replied Mahesh.

"Why should you not spend your earning on him? If you have so much difficulty in taking care of your father, let him be here! I cannot see him suffer any longer," said Sudhakar.

Mahesh kept quiet, his head hung. "Father," he said, "I'm sorry for having ill-treated you all these days. Come, come home. I shall give you all comforts and from now on you'll not have to work for your living."

Sudhakar's eyes were filled with tears. As he turned to go into his house, he saw his young daughter Aradhita and young son Aniruddha looking at him with a smile of understanding.





Windfall From The Wizard

Sitapur was a quiet village until the coming of the wizard who settled himself near the Hanuman temple. He sat on a deer-skin under the banyan tree that overlooked the temple. He placed in front of him two decorated pitchers and a human skull.

The temple goers gathered around him just out of curiosity. They asked him several questions to know about him and his powers. But soon, it was the other way round—the people told him about themselves and their problems. The wizard was able enough to solve many of them and very rapidly he gained their confidence, and, their money.

Among the few people who did not get trapped in the wizard's net was a clever one named Kanakdas. He was wanting to prove that the wizard was a fraud, but, he had neither the opportunity nor the courage to do so. However, he went on saying that the wizard is just a cheat, no wizard really.

One day Mahendra Seth, a very cunning rich man of the village came to Kanakdas's house and said:

"Kanakdas, what about the loan you took from me? When are you going to pay it to me?"

"Sir, you know my condition. Just wait for a few more days," pleaded Kanakdas.

"I could help you to repay me

the loan," said Mahendra Seth, "if you co-operate with me."

"Certainly I shall," replied Kanakdas in all enthusiasm.

"I hear you have no faith in the wizard who is camping near the Hanuman temple. Is it true?" asked Mahendra Seth.

"Yes, Sir. I have no faith in that fellow," answered Kanakdas.

"But, the wizard seems to have done me a favour for which I am obliged to pay him hundred rupees. If you could prove that he is false, then, I will not have to pay him anything. Can you do it?" asked Mahendra Seth.

Kanakdas felt a little timid and a little hesitant.

"By doing so, not only I'll save my money but also you'll be benefited. You won't have to pay me my due!" added Mahendra Seth, in a shy tone.

Kanakdas understood the foxy ideas of Mahendra Seth. He felt that it would be worth giving his idea a try.

"I shall try my best," answered Kanakdas picking up courage. "But I'll prove his fakeness to you alone?"

"All right," agreed the Seth.

Next day, Kanakdas went to the wizard and said in a sad tone: "Sir, I'm a poor farmer.



With great difficulty I'd saved hundred rupees but someone stole it. Please help me to get back my money."

"I shall surely help you out, Kanakdas, but..."

"I'll not be in a position to pay you anything for the help you'll render me," clarified Kanakdas.

"It is all right. Whatever such good-hearted people like you offer, the goddess accepts. I've been ordained by her to serve such people like you," said the wizard and closed his eyes.

The fact is, the wizard was in a fix. He knew that Kanakdas had no faith in him. If he could be won over then his strongest opponent could be vanquished. But if he failed to win him over, then everyone in the village would lose faith in him. Come what may, Kanakdas has to be helped, the wizard decided.

"Kanakdas," said the wizard in a grave tone and opening his eyes, "You had placed your money in a wrong place and one of the persons whom you know well has stolen it. I'll not mention his name now. The goddess has ordained me to forgive him if he surrenders this time, as this is his first crime. Tonight he



shall come and return me your money. If he does not, he will lose his speech and eyesight. I'll also reveal his name. And, then you can punish him as you want. So, my friend, come back tomorrow at this hour."

The wizard made sure that all those who were present heard him clearly. He hoped that the thief could come by the next morning and confess his guilt for fear of incurring the goddess's curse.

But unfortunately no one turned up till the last hour. Next day when Kanakdas returned, the wizard gave out hundred rupees from his own collection,

because, he could not risk his fame for the sake of just one hundred rupees.

"How great! How great!" exclaimed Kanakdas.

On the third day Mahendra Seth went to Kanakdas and said tauntingly, "Kanakdas, how very unfortunate! You could not prove that the wizard is a hoax! Yesterday, after you left, I had to give the wizard my hundred rupees!"

"Ha! Ha! Of course he would feel very happy for getting back the money he spent out of his own pocket!" laughed Kanakdas. "But could you not wait a little?"

"Why this insolent laughter? What do you mean by all that? Give me my hundred rupees right now!" shouted Mahendra Seth.

"I had never lost any money.

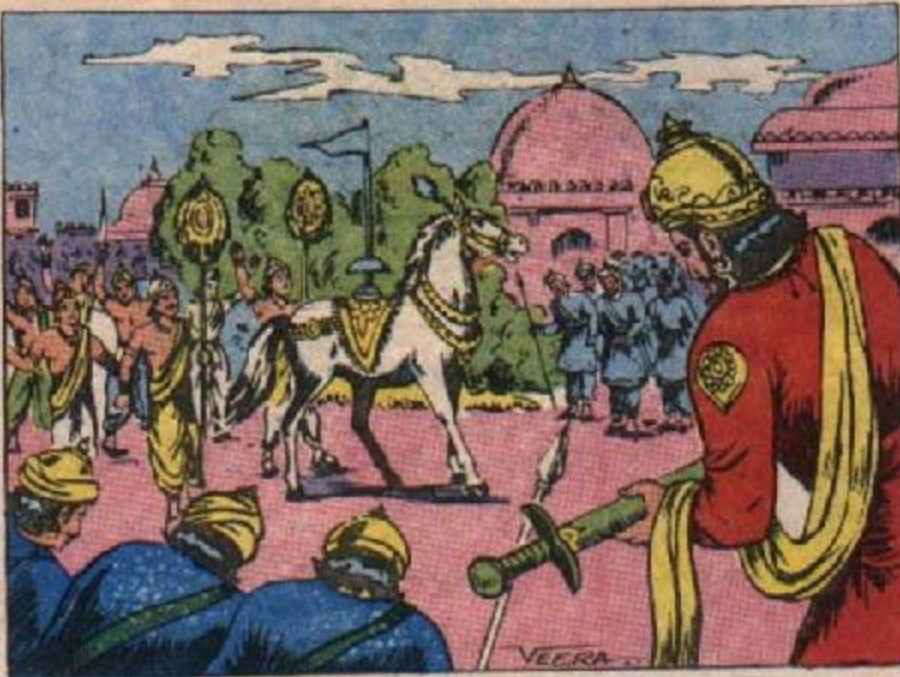
I had told a complete lie to you and to the so-called wizard. I was curious to see what he would do in such a circumstance. In order to save his popularity and his own skin he had to give me the hundred rupees from his own pocket. No one could return him that money because no one had ever stolen my money. Secondly, I had never lost it because I never had that money! So, you see, I've proved that he is only a hoax. Hence, my debt to you is nullified.

"And, as regards the reason for the wizard's happiness, he was glad to receive from you the hundred rupees which he had to give away to me. So, you are the final loser and I've gained in the process not one but two hundred rupees! Ha! Ha!" explained Kanakdas.



DESCENT OF THE GANGA

Sagara, the king of Ayodhya, once decided to perform a yajna. As was the custom a strong and handsome horse carried his flag. Followed by some of his sons and soliders, the horse wandered from kingdom to kingdom.



One day when the guards were sleeping or playing, Indra, disguised as a demon, stole the horse away. He carried it to Patala — the nether-world — and tied it to a pole in the hermitage of Sage Kapila.

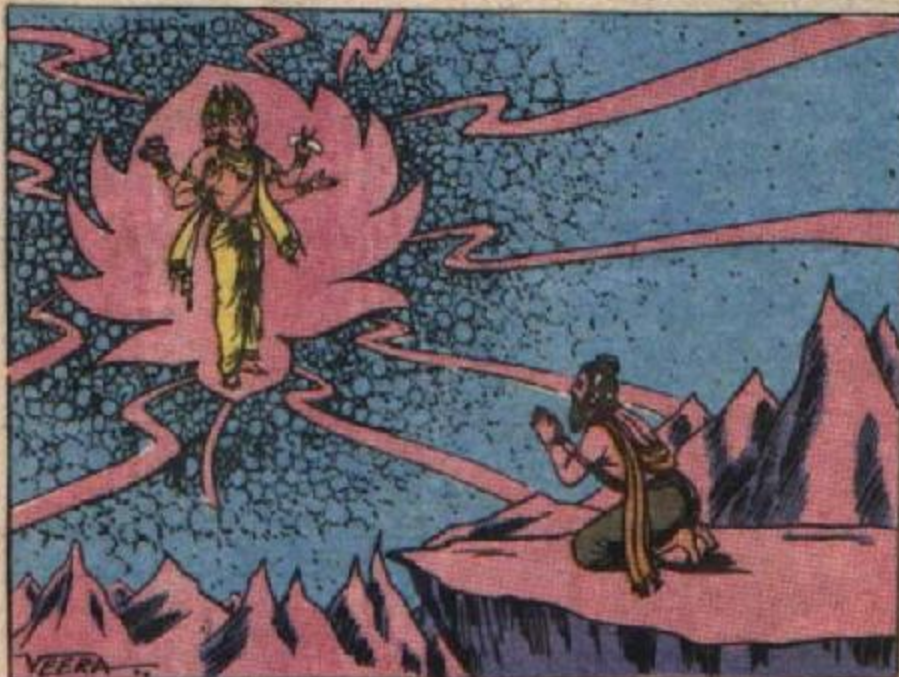


King Sagara had sixty thousand sons. After a long search, they found their way into the nether-world and found out the horse. They thought that it was Sage Kapila who had stolen the horse. They insulted the innocent sage.



The sage was surprised. Then he got angry. He uttered a curse saying that the insolent princes deserved to be reduced to ashes. Instantly the princes were consumed by devastating flames.

Many years passed. Anshuman, the grandson of King Sagara, pleased Sage Kapila and understood that only if the sacred Ganga, that remains in the jug carried about by Brahma, flowed down to the earth and then to the nether world, the princes can be resurrected.



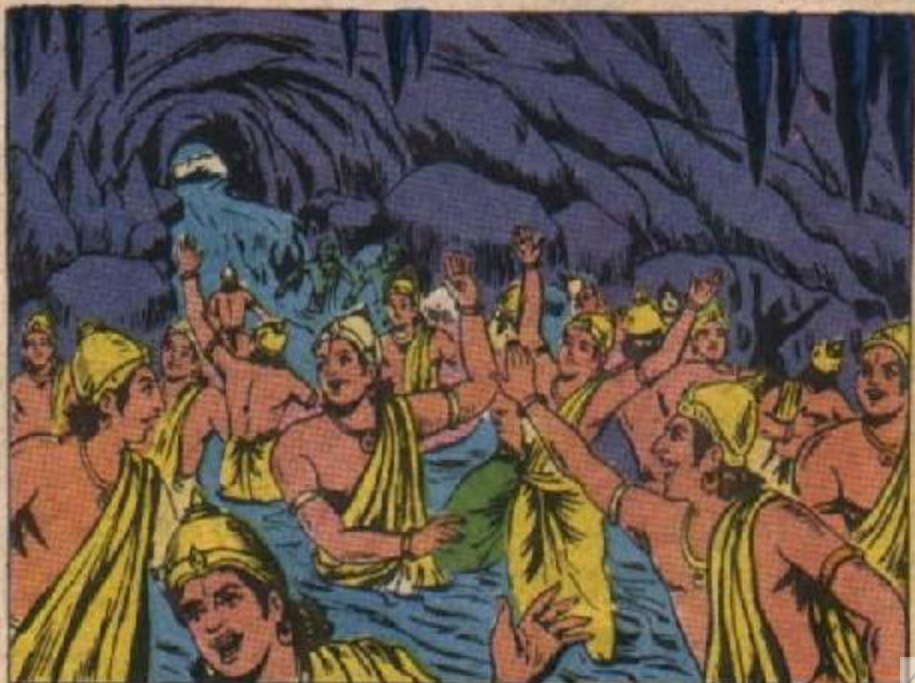
At last it was the great-great-grandson of Sagara, Prince Bhagiratha, who resolved to resurrect his ancestors and meditated on Brahma for a very long time. Brahma was pleased. He agreed to release Ganga.

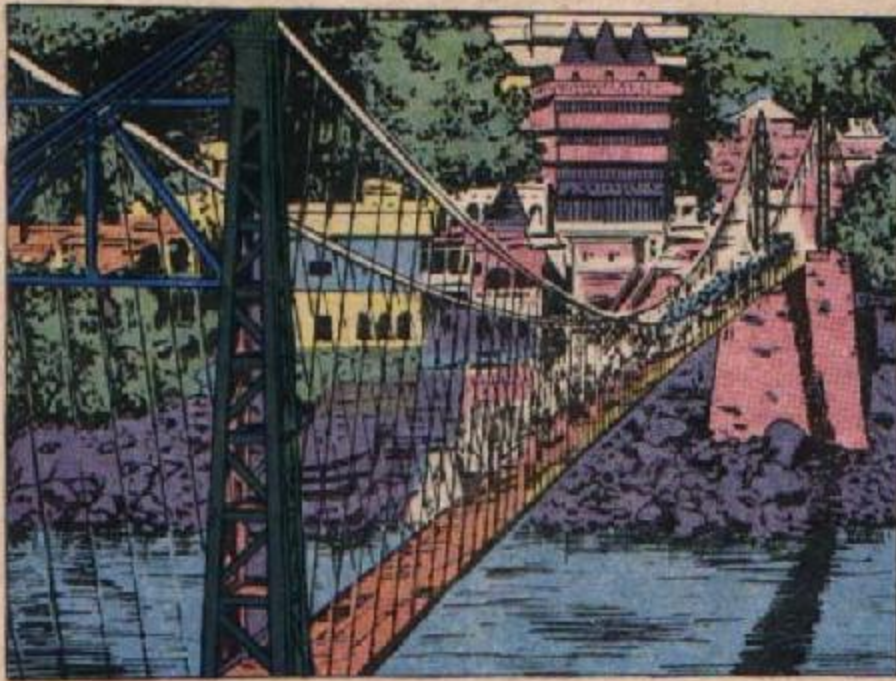
But there was the danger of the earth being shattered when the Ganga would fall on it. Bhagiratha understood that only the mighty Siva can bear the descent of the flow. Granting his prayer, Lord Siva received the impact on his head.



Thereafter the Ganga flowed, following Bhagiratha, across a vast stretch of the earth. She also branched into several streams and went in different directions, making the lands suitable for vegetation.

Bhagiratha led the sacred flow into the nether-world. The heap of ashes at Sage Kapila's hermitage was submerged. Out of it emerged the sixty thousand sons of Sagara. Thus Bhagiratha accomplished a unique mission.





INT

The Ganga is the most famous and sacred river of India. After its formation at Gomukh and clearer emergence at Gangotri, she begins her journey towards the plains from Rishikesh, an ancient holy place.

Of the many important places on the Ganga, two are Hardwar and Varanasi. Both are holy places of great antiquity and they attract innumerable pilgrims through the ages.



Another important city on the Ganga is Calcutta. Ganga near Calcutta is known as the Hooghly. From here the Ganga speeds towards the sea and divides into several branches while passing through the districts that includes the famous forest-land, Sunderbans, home of the Royal Bengal Tiger.



THE ONLY MAN

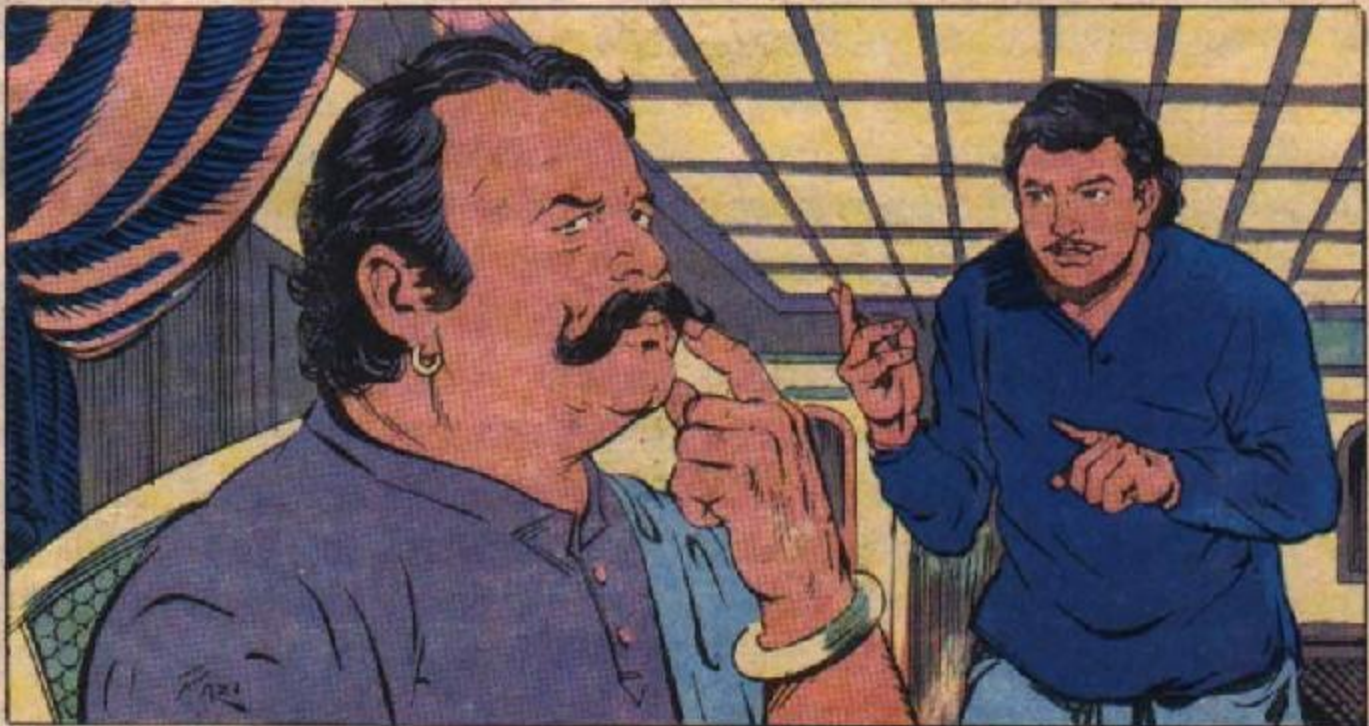
The villagers resolved to build a school. Everyone contributed to the best of his capacity. But the richest man in the village, Raoji, was left out. Nobody was prepared to approach him because he never contributed a paise for any cause.

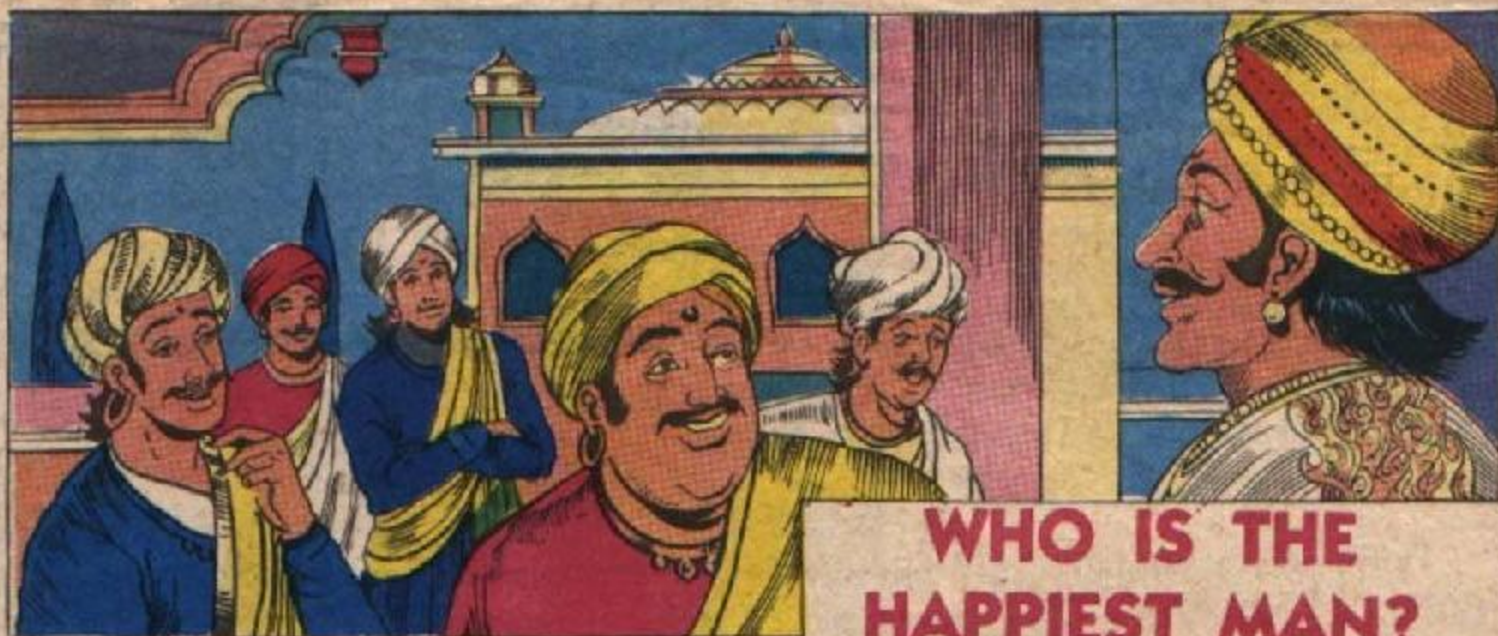
Prabhat, a young man who spent most of his time in the town, volunteered to meet Raoji for the purpose, though everybody discouraged him from doing so.

He approached Raoji and told him what he wanted.
"How do you approach me? Don't you know that I am never influenced by any soft word or any praise?" asked Raoji.

"Ah! You have just said what I told all the villagers. I told them that I know only one man in the world who can never be influenced by flattery—the only man—and he is Raoji. He will do whatever he thinks best in his own wisdom," said Prabhat.

"Right. I'm the only man who can never be won over by flattery. How much do you need?" asked Raoji, advancing towards his steel chest.





WHO IS THE HAPPIEST MAN?

“Your palace is more beautiful than the palace of Indra,” said a rich merchant, beaming with smiles.

“No one in the world has as good dancers and musicians as you have here,” appreciated a dance teacher.

“Our king is the most fortunate and the happiest person under the sun,” commented some ministers of the court.

King Pulakesh felt very pleased with such flatterers hovering around him. He used to give even rewards to persons who praised him best. So, there was almost a competition among the courtiers to find out the best means of satisfying the king's ego! In due course, the king came to really believe that he was the happiest person and the richest king under the sun!

One day, a saintly person by

the name of Amrit Muni was passing through the kingdom. The king sent him a request soliciting the Muni to stay in the palace for some days. Amrit Muni agreed.

The king put up his best show of wealth and luxury and entertained the Muni with beautiful dances and the best of music. He was expecting that the Muni too would compliment him for all these rich shows presented in his honour. But, Amrit Muni kept silent. The king got disappointed and asked the Muni:

“Muni Maharaj, you have surely visited many kingdoms and seen many kings. Have you seen anywhere any person happier and richer than me?”

“I knew a person by the name of Vikas, who, according to me was the happiest person. He was a poor villager who lived a



simple, honest and contented life till the end of his days. After fulfilling his social demands, he joined the army of the king and gave his life in a battle for the sake of his king. None can be compared with him," replied Amrit Muni in a quiet tone.

The king was shocked to hear this. "How is it possible that he was happier than I? I've not even heard his name! Well, you would class me at least as the second happier man, won't you?" asked the king eagerly.

"I am afraid not," replied the Muni. "In another village I met two brothers who are much happier than you. They are farmers but who do all work in the name of the Lord and remain happy always."

The king could not bear it any longer. His jealousy turned into anger, and he said, 'Amrit Muni, I had great respect for your judgment and wisdom. But now, I'm very disappointed with you!'

"True happiness is something that is found within a person and it does not depend upon anything external," explained the Muni. "Real happiness has nothing to do with wealth. Moreover, how long will all



these things last? Nothing in this world is permanent, except God. And who can guarantee if you'll enjoy this luxury till the end of your life? All this wealth could be snatched away from you, turning you into a pauper in the twinkling of an eye. How can such things guarantee you happiness?"

Amrit Muni did not want to say anything more. He left the palace immediately.

"Maharaj, do not bother about what he said. Just grey hair and a long beard do not make a person wise. What does he know of the value of wealth and the meaning of real, lasting hap-



piness which you are now enjoying? Forget about him, Maharaj," advised the king's flatterers.

The king soon forgot the episode and went ahead with his normal life of luxury and fun.

A year passed.

One night, as King Pulakesh was retiring to bed, he heard someone shouting below his window, "They have come! Run, run, save your lives!"

Within a minute, the chief of his army walked into his room and announced, "Maharaj, we have been surprised by King Pradeep Gupta, our enemy from the north. Our army is

fighting valiantly, but, I'm afraid we have been caught unawares and the battle may not be equal. We may have to surrender."

The king was shocked at this sudden turn of events. He saw no way to escape. He decided to disguise himself as a common man and sneak away from the palace.

Just as he was about to pass the last gate of the palace, an enemy general raised his sword at him.

The younger son of the king, who was following his father, got frightened and blurted out: "He is my father, King Pulakesh! Don't kill him!"

The disguised king was at once captured and taken to Pradeep Gupta, the enemy king, who decided to get rid of him. He believed that an enemy king alive will always remain a threat. He ordered for a pyre to be built and the enemy king to be burned on it.

King Pulakesh stood on the pyre, bound to a post. At this tragic moment, he gave a last look at his palace and at the group of people which included his flatterers.

On a sudden he realised what



Amrit Muni had said—and then, turning towards the ones near him, he said, “What Amrit Muni has said is true. Nothing in this world is permanent and happiness does not depend upon wealth and external circumstances. It is true no one can say what is going to happen tomorrow—if one is to live happily or one is going to be thrown into sorrows...” The flames of the pyre slowly rose up as he spoke in a sad repentant tone.

King Pradeep Gupta, heard what King Pulakesh said and in a moment something happened

inside him too. He realised the impermanence of his own power and he thought what if after a few years his fortune too changed for the worse and he has to suffer like King Pulakesh?

He immediately ordered King Pulakesh to be released and to be brought down from the burning pyre.

The kingdom was given back to King Pulakesh, which he ruled thereafter under the able guidance of Amrit Muni, the wise seer.

Once at a dinner they were discussing the celebrated English writer, Thackeray. “Thackeray awoke one morning and found himself famous!” observed a lady.

“No, madam,” said Northcliffe. “Thackeray had been writing eight hours a day for fifteen years before that morning dawned. The man who wakes up and finds himself famous, has not been asleep.”

MORE ABOUT PLURAL AND SINGULAR FORMS

"Grandpa, you are to tell us if the plural of *spectacle* is *spectacles*," Rajesh reminded Prof. Chowdhury.

"As you know, *spectacle* means a sight or something worth looking at. Its plural is of course *spectacles*. But there are some words that mean two things in the plural. The second meaning of *spectacles* is glasses which I am wearing. Some other words that fall into this category are *Numbers*, the second meaning of which is metre in poetry, and *Customs*, the second meaning of which is toll or tax," said Grandpa Chowdhury.

"Grandpa, has *letters* a second meaning? I read in a letter-head-'An academy of letters'. They certainly do not confine their activities to alphabet!" asked Reena.

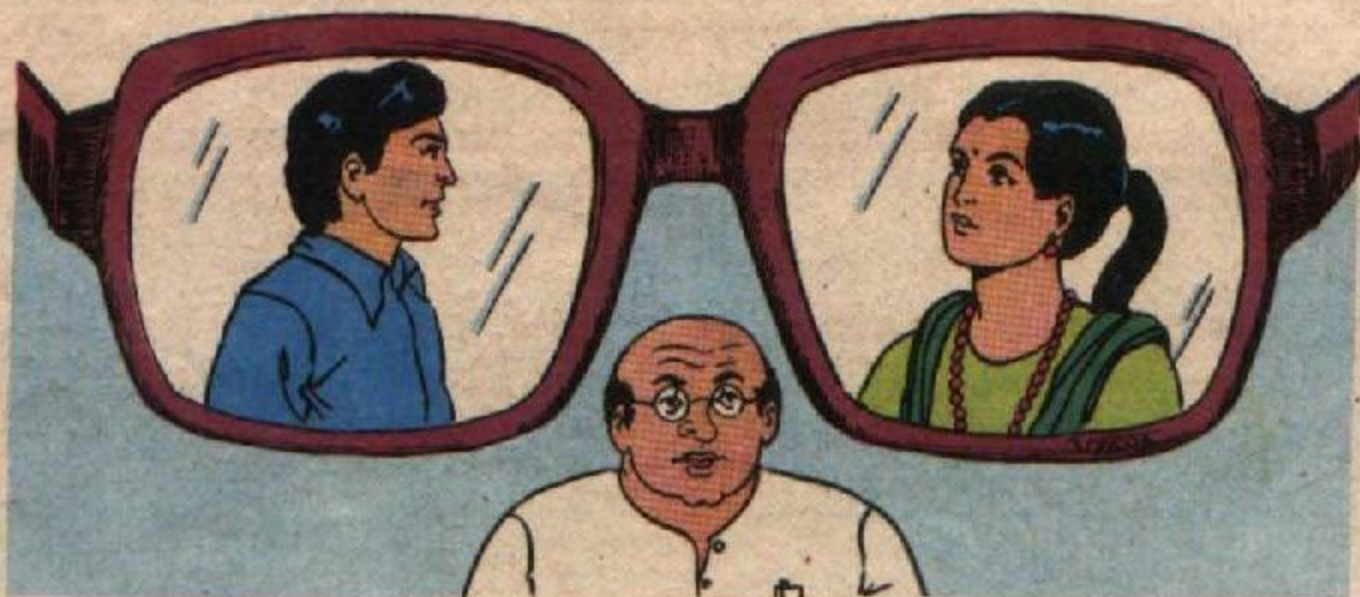
"Yes. *Letters* is the plural of letter—a unit of any alphabet, but *letters* also means learning or literary culture. It is in this latter sense that an institution can be an academy of letters."

"Grandpa, can *means* be used as a singular?" asked Reena.

"It has been used as singular for a long time. Samuel Johnson wrote even in the 18th century, 'Politics are now nothing more than *a means* of rising in the world.' You can say, 'The one proper means of passing the examination, is to study well.' Is it clear?"

"Yes," said Reena, "but in the sentence you quoted from Johnson *politics* is used as plural. But as we know..."

"Keen is your observation! Yes, the word *politics* is plural in form, but it is singular in meaning when it is used to mean a subject, as do the words like *mathematics*, *physics* or *economics*. People have forgotten that *politics* was once used only in plural."

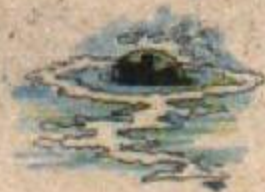




Do You Know?

A bolt of lightning can strike the earth with a force as great as 100 million volts.

There is no one who does not dream. Those who say they do not dream, only forget their dreams.



The Pacific Ocean contains an area larger than all the land surface on the earth put together!

Ninety-seven percent of the world's water is in the ocean.



The sun is 330,330 times larger than the earth.

The star Antares is 60,000 times larger than our sun.



All the planets in our solar system could be placed inside the planet Jupiter.

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



M. Natarajan

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A gentle is a man who can disagree without being disagreeable.

— *Anonymous.*

Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity.

— *St. Augustine.*

Assassination has never changed the history of the world.

—*Disraeli.*



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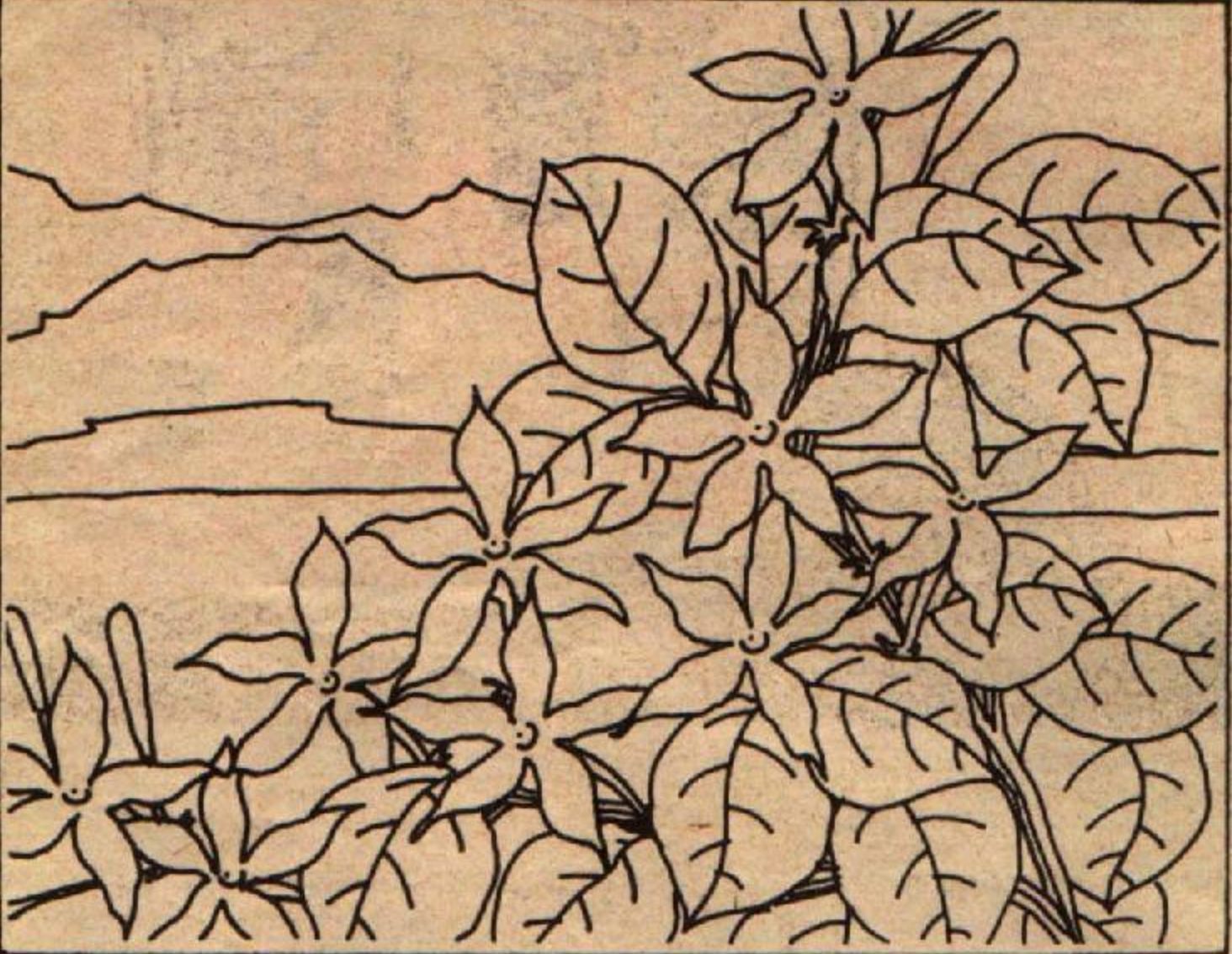
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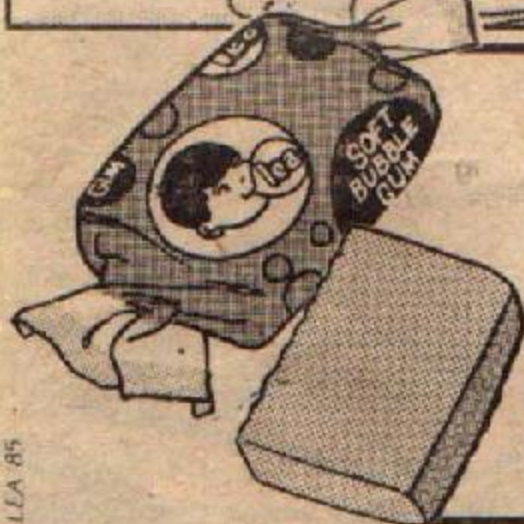
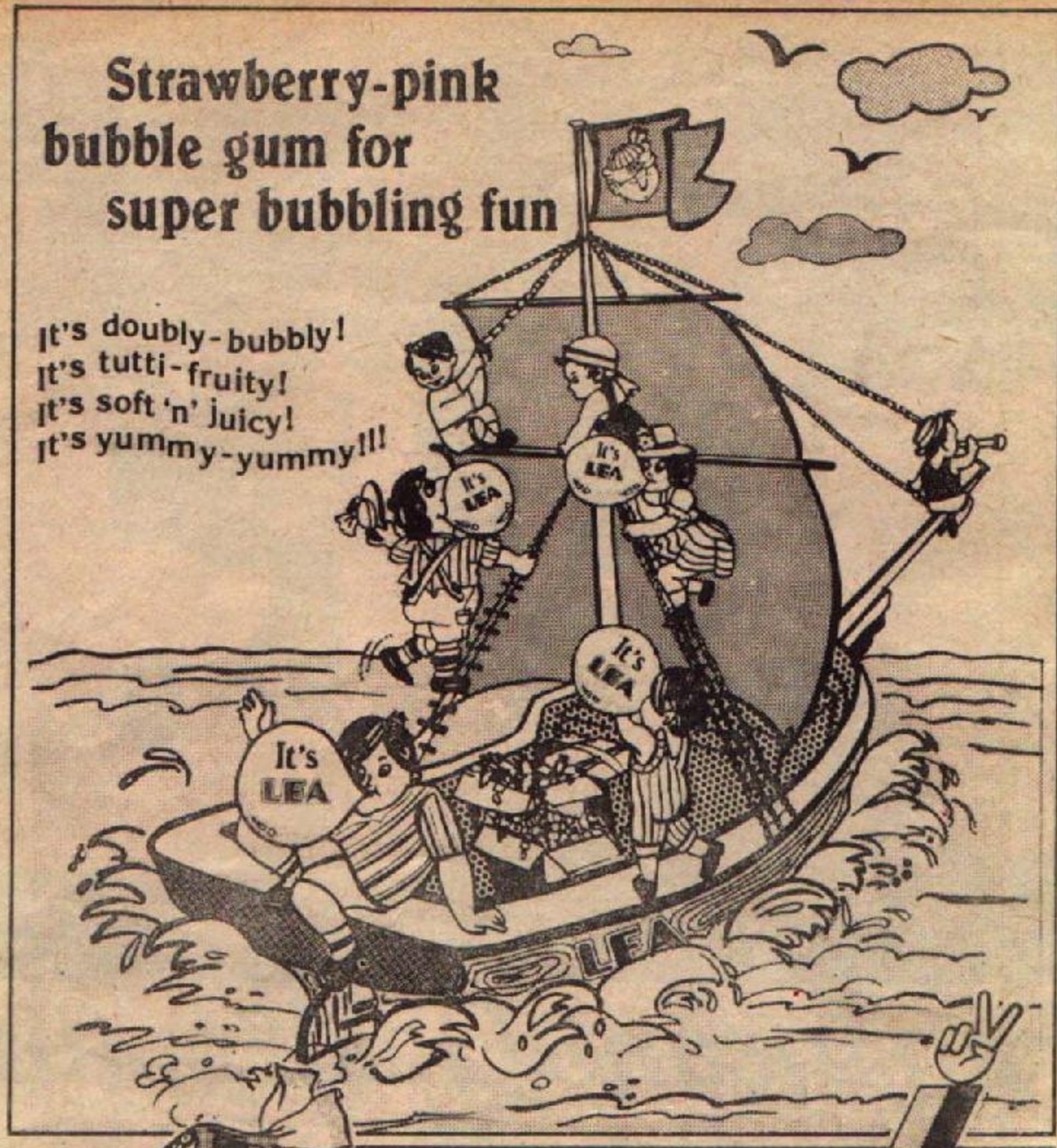
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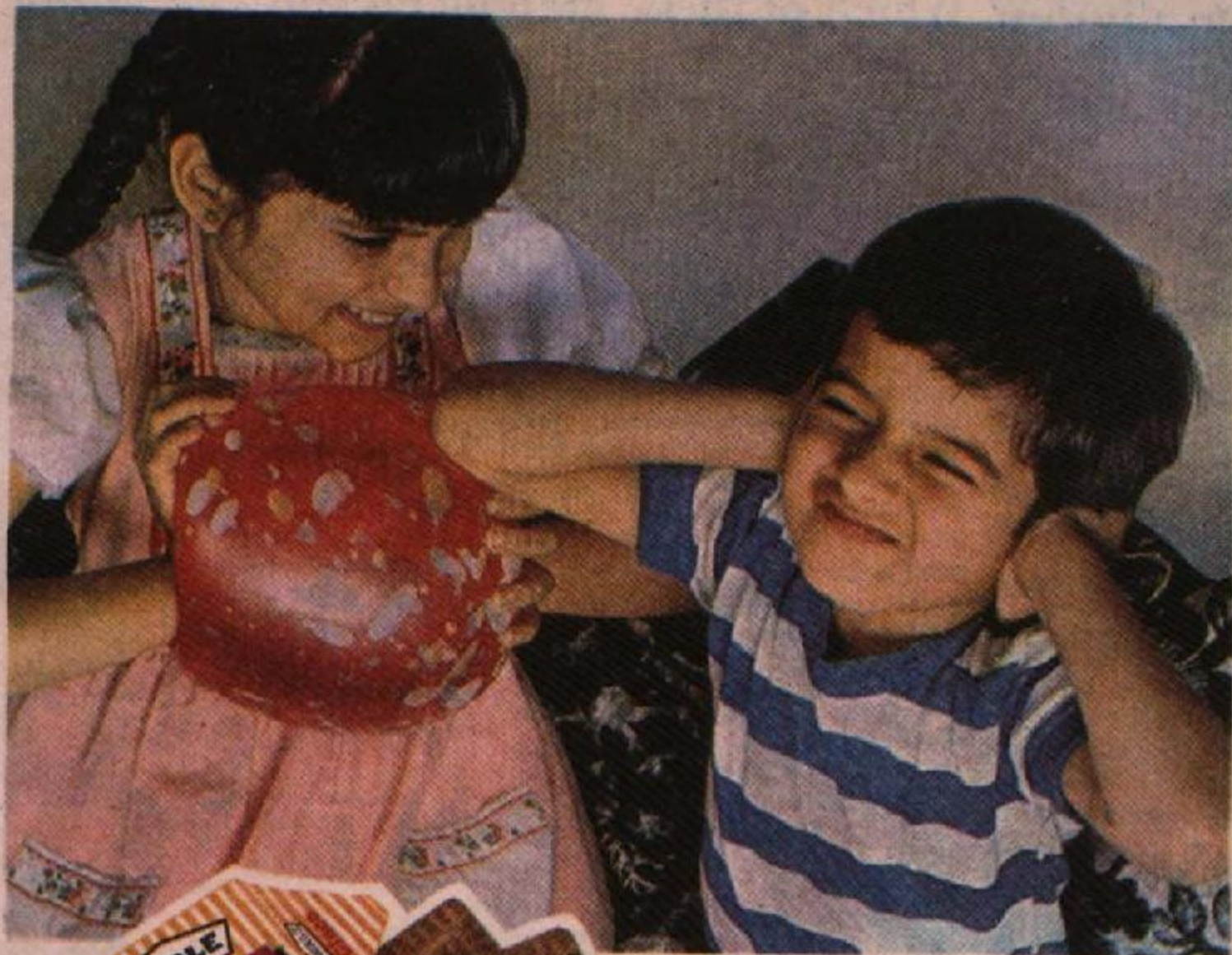
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